Tibetan Mysteries

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BOOKS

Tibetan Mysteries

Translated and with an introduction
by Béla Hamvas

Contents

[Introduction]
Om mani padme hum
Daily Practice The Straight
Path
The Rolang
The Transfer of Consciousness of the
Deceased (Pho-Wa) Tumo
From the teachings of Tagpo
Lhadje Chöd
The
Dream
The Bardo
Chag Gya Chenpo (The Great Symbol of Liberation)
Tibetan and Sanskrit terms

[INTRODUCTION]

There is no need to scrape away the layer of Buddhism that has settled upon Tibet; the layer, like dust, can easily be blown away, and then one stands face to face with what Tibet has always been, even before Buddhism, for many thousands of years. This Tibet, in short and in a word: Bon.

Bön is, in essence, a practice—specifically, a detailed, precise and systematic practice of ritual contact between man and the supernatural Powers. Bön is the practice of the mystical ascetic; it is through this that contact with invisible forces is maintained. The religious metaphysics at the root of these practical procedures is no different here than it is elsewhere, without exception, among all prehistoric peoples. There is only one metaphysical tradition. The entirety of this metaphysics, in its prehistoric form: the Veda. Without the Veda, the practical system of Bön is either blasphemous magic or groundless superstition. And anyone who reads the Tibetan mysteries without knowledge of the Veda's essential ideas feels only a terrifying shudder; they do not understand their true essence.

The fundamental teaching of the Veda is that only a vanishingly small part of the world, and only its outermost veil, is visible, perceptible and material; the incomparably greater part is invisible and immaterial. The destiny of the world, history, human existence, and the cause, origin and true meaning of cosmic phenomena lie in the invisible, immaterial world. What we can experience with our senses is merely the heavy material body of the world; behind, beneath, within and around this body lies a reality inaccessible to the senses. Before taking on a material body and after shedding it, man lived and will live as an invisible soul. The true message of metaphysical teaching is that there is but one reality: the soul; that which is not the soul is illusion, maya. This entire material world is also an illusion; it arises, passes away, and changes restlessly, like a dream. The multitude of spirits, ghosts and demons are an illusion, for each is merely a figment of the soul's imagination. Even the host of gods is an illusion. There is but one reality, one being: the soul.

In Bön, this metaphysics is self-evident and has become second nature. The great practical system takes this as its starting point and applies it. The meaning of every Bön practice and Bön mystery is to dispel illusion, to break the spell of maya, to step out of the world of delusion, ignorance, stupor and dream-images, and to return to reality, to the soul. This is the aim of ascetic practices such as tumo; this guided the great saints of Tibet, such as Naropa and Milarepa; this is the aim in rolang, in chöd, but above all in the

Bardo. The name for this direct return to reality is the Straight Path, the Mahayana, the Great Way. This is the Tibetan Bön.

Alexandra David-Neel once travelled through Tibet as a beggar woman. On the road, she was attacked by robbers who took her money and were about to leave when the European lady, who was well acquainted with the religion and customs of the people, had a saving thought. In a loud voice, she began to recite one of Bön's mystical curse formulas. She cursed the highwaymen, their kin, their relatives, every being who had ever come into contact with them, and the money they had taken from her; she summoned the host of dakinis, witches, demons, devils, the furies, bloodthirsty ghosts, vampires and suffocating spirits. The robbers were so terrified that they hastily returned the money and fled.

The most remarkable thing about the whole affair, says Madame David-Neel, was the effect produced by the dark words of the curse. There was an occult atmosphere. The air seemed to be filled with the oppressive presence of the summoned monsters, as if they were truly there. In the space of a few moments, they found themselves under a threatening and heavy pressure. Even the woman casting the curse felt that she stood on the threshold of an indescribable horror. The group standing on the country road was surrounded by a black, heavy mass, and from this invisible tension, it seemed as though an elemental disaster might suddenly emerge: lightning, a falling rock, a gale, a hurricane or a cloudburst; but a predatory beast might have emerged; and some hellish monster might have emerged as well.

Everything that comes from Tibet has this occult atmosphere. There is something not entirely innocent in every word of these mysteries. One cannot be too cautious with them, cannot take them seriously enough, and cannot respect them enough. The ascetic practice of Tibetan Bön is infinitely dangerous. In Tibet, there are hundreds of accounts of cases in which even ascetics under the supervision of learned and careful masters have perished in these practices, becoming deranged, suffering from mental illness, going mad, or, in more than one instance, dying suddenly under mysterious circumstances. Madame David-Neel's books recount several such characteristic cases.

The occult atmosphere radiates from the extraordinarily potent evocative power inherent in the words of the mysteries and in the magical formulas. This is partly a characteristic of the Tibetan language, but partly also because the words of a practice continued over millennia have absorbed supernatural powers; ultimately, however, it naturally depends on the efficacy of the formula. As a result of the constant use of these formulas, it is as though the visible and invisible worlds in Tibet

lie closer to one another. There are no miracles in Tibet. Why? Because the fact that something extraordinary happens is taken for granted. In Tibet, as a result of the mystical asceticism practised for millennia, it seems easier to cross over from the material world into the invisible, and from the invisible into the material world. And it is not just easier to cross over. The boundary is so close, so uncertain, so thoroughly permeated and so omnipresent that one might feel dizzy, stumble over it without thinking, trip, or fall through. All this can happen in a single, irreparable moment. The proximity of the boundaries of the invisible world evokes a constant, thrilling tension and arouses an unsettling sense of anticipation. This explains the occult atmosphere. One must be infinitely cautious with everything that comes from Tibet.

Europeans must exercise caution towards Tibetan Bön, for they have, over time, completely forgotten the conduct manifested in ascetic practices and embodied in the words of the formulas. Europeans understand well the conduct of their historical figures—Pericles, Caesar, Peter the Great—and know that in them the extraordinary power of the soul was manifested. They also understand the figures of their poetry—Achilles, Aeneas, Parsifal—and know that these men are manifestations of the heroic soul. But he no longer understands at all that manifestation of the heroic spirit which is the mystic, the prophet, the ascetic, the saint. He believes that the heroism of the spirit always achieves an external result, so-called success; this success: fame, glory, the consequence of great resolve and great deeds, a mighty and awe-inspiring spectacle, a spellbinding example. If a heroic spirit lives within someone, this belief today is that it must be like fireworks; it must dazzle the eye with the grandeur of its deeds.

There is, however, another form of heroism of the soul, one that is at home in the East. Heroism is expressed not outwardly but inwardly; the hero is not a king, a general or a statesman, but a sage, an ascetic, a mystic, a poet or a philosopher. In prehistoric times, no distinction was made between these two forms of heroism. Homer called the warriors Ajax and Hector heroes, just as he did the seer or the singer. The outward-striving heroic spirit is present in the European; the inward-turning, religious, metaphysical, ascetic and mystical heroism is not.

And it is hopeless to understand the secret of the Tibetan ascetic and the Tibetan mysteries without the experience of inner heroism. In Tibet, no one in whom the heroic spirit has awakened cares what effect this will have on others, what success it will bring, or what spectacle it will present to others.

The true heroes of asceticism lived in such a way that no one knew of them; they died in a cave in the Himalayas and their bones were never found. In China, this way of life is called ‘notable anonymity’. Nameless, because he might be a beggar on the road, and no one knows what lies within him; but notable, because the heroic soul has raised man to an unheard-of height of existence. In the East, there are many hundreds and thousands of such heroes living in this ‘notable anonymity’, who sometimes even conceal their sound mind and appear outwardly as half-wits or buffoons, lest the outside world hinder their unimaginable inward striving. The life of the external hero unfolds before the eyes of humanity; the life of the internal hero unfolds before the eyes of God alone.

In Tibet, even regarding the lives of the greatest heroes, the saints—such as Naropa or Milarepa—only naive legends have survived. And all that can be known about the lives of the great ascetics is fable-like, didactic, instructive, but not realistic. Everything that is external. In Tibet, it is entirely uncertain and elusive. There are no facts, no dates, no data, no monuments. Reality lies within. Alexandra David-Neel calls the Tibetan ascetics ‘athletes of the soul’. This is a truly European, superficial mistake, a misunderstanding, almost foolishness. Caesar and Napoleon were not athletes; they were men of the heroic spirit. Nor does the Tibetan ascetic spend forty years alone in a rock hut at an altitude of four thousand metres for the sake of sport, eating nothing but nettles; this is the heroic spirit. That heroic spirit which lives inwardly, towards the invisible, before the face of God, renouncing the world, heedless of mankind, neglecting the body, fasting, in the biting cold, clad in a single sackcloth, immersed in meditation.

The ascetic practice of Bön is nothing other than the Straight Path of the heroic soul; it is trodden by those who wish to step out of the illusory world of the material and return to reality.

In the eighth century of our era, Buddhism, originating from India, took root in the ancient Bon tradition. The new teaching altered the old one only slightly; for the most part, it was merely a change of names. Yet, if anything, it emphasised even more strongly what was essential in Tibetan mysticism: the passion for breaking free from the illusion of the material world. In the past, this illusion was called maya; now the name is samsara. Samsara is the visible world, the meaningless wandering within it, ignorance, delusion, and the cycle of birth, suffering and death. The name for liberation used to be atman; now Buddhism has popularised the term nirvana. Nirvana is liberation, perfect awakening.

Buddhism and Bön merge in various ways. The most notable

such fusion is the Kagyu school, which preserved Bon intact but integrated it into Buddhist metaphysics. The Kagyu school is notable for having given Tibet its great saints. These saints—Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa and Milarepa—lived around the turn of the first millennium of our era. Tilopa studied in India. The young Naropa heard of his fame and set out to find him so that he might become his disciple. In the East, particularly in ancient times, the Master played a quite unique role. Two forms of birth were recognised: physical birth from a father and mother; yet more important than this was spiritual birth. Here, both the father and the mother were one person: the master, or in Tibetan, the guru. The guru was father, mother, but also god, a being beyond human. Nothing was as important as choosing the guru and remaining loyal to him.

Tilopa evaded the young ascetic. Naropa then began to pursue him. Tilopa mocked him and played with him. Naropa, however, did not give up. In the end, they never met face to face. The Master, playing hide-and-seek, trained the pursuing disciple into an admirable mystic and magician through this unique method of constantly hiding from him and communicating only indirectly.

The great saint of the Tibetans, however, was Milarepa. Milarepa was a magician, an ascetic, an unrivalled master of all Bön practices, and a poet. His verses are still recited and quoted today by lamas, children and women, in monasteries, temples and marketplaces. Milarepa's ambition was to attain perfect enlightenment within a single human lifetime. He does not count on being reborn after time immemorial and then continuing his work towards liberation; he does not postpone his task to the afterlife, where, as a being living in a light spirit-body, he might progress more swiftly towards Buddha, nirvana, and enlightenment. In no other Tibetan was the heroic spirit as mighty as in Milarepa. The ascetic had lived alone in the mountains for more than thirty years. His sister hears of him, visits him and calls him back to worldly life. Milarepa refuses. At the same time, the first results of his long ascetic practices became apparent: he could now step out of his heavy physical body, travel through the realms of the world, and even fly whilst still in his earthly form.

Tibet's highest spiritual path is known as the Straight Path. The path is straight as an arrow because it uncompromisingly casts aside all rituals, prejudices and traditions; it pays no heed to good or bad deeds, compassion or reward; it chooses its direction, sets off and proceeds with unwavering determination towards the sole goal: nirvana, perfect awareness.

Most Bön practices are the asceticism of the heroic soul at each stage of the path. Such is the ‘Daily Practice’ offering meditative thoughts, such is the teaching on ‘Liberation’, such is the teaching of Master Tagpo Lhadje, such is the section on dreams, the aim of which is to unite one’s waking and dream consciousness into a single continuous whole. Such is the stage belonging to the Straight Path described by the rolang mystery. Dark demonic forces may hinder the ascetic on his path, and the tool suitable for overcoming them is the tongue of a dead man, which he must obtain under gruesome circumstances.

The two greatest mysteries of the Straight Path are tumo and chöd.

The solitary Tibetan hermit often lives in a makeshift stone hut in a rocky mountain range five thousand metres above sea level, where he may live alone for fifteen to twenty years. In such an environment, the greatest enemy of human life is not a lack of food, but the cold. The ascetics, however, know the method they have inherited from ancient times, which keeps their bodies at a constant, steady warmth. This warmth is called tumo.

Tumo is not physical, but a spiritual fire. ‘The gods’ warm, soft blanket’, as the books say. When a person awakens it within themselves, they fall into a quiet trance. According to Tibetan mystical anatomy, there is a channel connecting the seed accumulated in the groin and the brain. This channel regulates the body’s warmth by distributing the heat radiating from the seed throughout the body.

Legend speaks of how, in such a state, the human body is truly filled with the heat of the seed, indeed with the seed itself as it flows out. It tells of an ascetic standing naked on a mountainside, amidst wild rocks, in a desolate place, in the biting cold of winter. Enveloped in the lukewarm, soft blanket of the gods, he was so lost in ecstasy that he did not notice his jealous wife approaching with a sharp dagger. Seeking revenge because her husband had abandoned her and retreated to the mountains, she wanted to kill him. She stabbed the dagger into his back, but miraculously, it was not blood but semen that flowed from the ascetic’s body.

An indispensable prerequisite for the practice of tumo is an exceptionally strong imagination and ability to concentrate. The ascetic must learn to use his abilities to expand the invisible channel that conducts the seed. With prolonged practice, the channel can be expanded to such an extent that not only a human being can fit within it, but the entire existing world as well.

The ascetic must cast off all clothing and, at first, attempt the practice for only a few minutes at dawn, before sunrise; the

he may remain under the open sky for longer. The main stages of the practice are as follows:

1. The ascetic focuses all his spiritual energy on the channel connecting the pit of the stomach and the brain, imagining it to be as thin as a hair. The Tibetan name for this channel is ‘uma’. As in India, in Tibet too, the pit of the stomach and fire are closely connected. Warmth enters the body through the uma.
2. The ascetic evokes a current of air in the uma. He does this through controlled breathing. The method of breathing is the basis of all ascetic practices. The current of air revives the fire of the seed and draws it upwards.
3. The uma, which is as thin as a hair, can be expanded through concentration to the thickness of a matchstick, and then to the thickness of a little finger. Meanwhile, one must not forget to increase the draught. The thicker the channel, the more intensely the breathing prescribed for this purpose must be applied.
4. The channel becomes as thick as an arm. Hot air flows up and down, and the fire of the core burns ever more fiercely. The more it is stoked, the fiercer the steam that emerges from it.
5. The channel fills the entire body. The human body becomes a single umá.
6. The uma extends to the mountains, the whole country, the earth and the world. The entire universe is a vast cylindrical channel. The ascetic no longer feels that he is a body, that he is a human being, that he is standing on the rock, that he is surrounded by material nature. He falls into a trance and feels as though he is swimming on the lukewarm waves of heat aroused by his own breath.

An experienced tumo master can sometimes reach this sixth stage in as little as half an hour, and in Tibet there are accounts of hermits who lived continuously for days, even weeks, under the blanket of the gods. Milarepa recounts in his autobiography that once, in winter, amongst the great peaks of the Himalayas, where he had withdrawn to meditate, a snowstorm caught him outside his dwelling. For nine days the snow fell unceasingly, the hurricane raged, and tumo saved him: he stood in the shadow of a rock, even cast off his sackcloth, and evoked the tumo. The poet wrote a beautiful, mystical verse about this miraculous escape, and every tumo disciple must know this verse.

The path back is the same:

1. The ascetic regulates his breathing, and with this the fury of the tongues of fire subsides. The uma slowly contracts and once again encompasses only the human body.
2. The channel narrows even further and is now no thicker than a human arm.
3. Breathing and the flow of air within the uma must be progressively moderated, but care must be taken to ensure this does not happen too quickly.
4. The channel gradually becomes the thickness of a thumb, then a little finger.

5. The uma is as thick as a matchstick.
6. The uma is as thin as a hair.
7. The uma disappears. At the same time, the warmth ceases, but its effect remains. The ascetic then lives in that spiritual state evoked within him by the expansion into the universe.

The word chöd literally means ‘cutting off’. A literary translation might be: ‘the execution’. There are three chöd mysteries: the white, the black and the red, known as the ‘feast’. The ascetic sacrifices his sangsara-Self in all three mysteries and offers himself to the beings of the afterlife. In the first case, however, the aim is to attain the drink of life, amrita; for the sacrificed body is mystically transformed into the water of life, and the ascetic bestows this drink upon the world, so that all may attain salvation through it.

In the second case, the aim is to purge the impurities accumulated over previous lives. This is the black feast. As the manuscript states, it is usually held at dusk. The ascetic typically chooses a so-called karmically burdened place: a cemetery, a grave mound, or a place where misfortune has befallen someone. For it is here that beings from the afterlife constantly pass through. The idea is that in the middle of an endless swamp lies a heap of ashes. This image expresses the accumulated dross of past lives.

The red feast is the actual execution. The ascetic severs himself once and for all from the illusion of material existence. He executes the samsara-Self.

Chöd, that is, the whole of Tibetan mysticism, is the foundation of Bön: the migspa. Migspa means ‘concept’. During meditation, a person firmly grasps a certain, largely defined image and lives within that image with all their might. They fixate on it with their thoughts for so long and so intensely that the image comes to life within them. Once the image has come to life, they are usually already in a state of ecstasy. An element of the soul must be made autonomous: this is the fundamental principle of occult psychology. This is migspa.

The process is extremely dangerous, because the image that has become autonomous can easily engage in activities that could prove fatal to the ascetic. The important thing is this: one must always proceed only up to a certain limit, and one must develop one’s mindfulness to such a high degree that the autonomous image can never gain unrestricted dominion over the person. This complex and lofty state can, of course, only be attained through prolonged practice. The images evoked in chöd have driven countless Tibetan ascetic candidates mad, and have even killed them. The opening image of the Red Feast is precisely that of the Vajra-Dakini (the ascetics’ guardian goddess)

simply bites the yogi's head off. After the decapitation, she lays him out, skins him, rips out his entrails, and scatters them to the vultures. The practitioner of chöd must experience all this as vividly as possible: they must see themselves as a jet of blood gushes from their neck, their belly is ripped open, their organs scattered, and foul-smelling birds scavenge over them.

The outward form of the chöd mystery is as follows: the ascetic, or naljorpa as the Tibetans call him, using the implements listed in the manuscript, in a chosen place and at a chosen time, completely alone, enters into meditation. This immersion usually begins by gazing at the Mandala. The Mandala is a mystical, symbolic diagram or drawing. When the image required by the instructions has come to life and the naljorpa has reached the brink of ecstasy, the ritual dance begins.

The dance consists of a sequence of geometric movements. Strict, millimetre-precise movements must be performed with the hands and feet. Symbolic figures must be traced in the air and on the ground, stamping in time, whilst striking the tambourine (damura) and blowing the horn made from a shinbone (kangling).

The drum and horn summon the demons to supper. The table is laid: the tablecloth is the ascetic's skin; the feast itself: the ascetic's flesh, bones and blood. Meanwhile, he must pray aloud, calling upon the Supreme Being (Dharma-Kaya, literally the spiritual body of the Supreme Being), calling upon the gurus, the great masters of antiquity, and at certain points he must utter the great magic word 'Phat'.

The blood-curdling drama reaches its climax. The meaning of the red feast is this: 'Since time immemorial, in innumerable forms, I have consumed countless beings for food, clothing, pleasure, adornment, and all manner of other services, and thus I have sustained my pampered body; thus I have been strong enough to withstand passing away. Now the day has come for me to pay my debt. I offer this living body as a sacrifice and give it over to destruction. I give my body to the hungry, my blood to the thirsty, my skin to the naked, my bones as fuel to those who are cold. I give my joys to those who suffer, I give the breath of my life to those who wish to remain alive" (David-Neel).

The ascetic ultimately renounces every advantage that might accrue to him from his sacrifice. He asks the Great Knowledge to render the result he has achieved null and void. He needs no privilege, he needs no glory. What did he want? To know reality and, dispelling the illusion, to return to reality. He needs no fame, no name, no glory – he wishes to remain anonymous. "I need no

reward. In the realm of truth, there is no merit!"
Thereafter, the spirit may rise straight up and return to the Dharma-Kaya – to Nirvana. And those days, or months, or years which the ascetic still spends here on earth, let them be spent in complete renunciation of the Self. He serves humanity. And his service consists in warning others: the soul has attained an exceptional form here and now in human shape, for a small glimmer of light dawns within it. Whilst living as a dull, numb plant, animal, or demonic being, it was powerless. Now is the time for it to awaken fully. The naljorpe devotes his life to spreading this light and awakening as many people as possible.

The Bardo Thodol, the Tibetan 'Book of the Dead', was translated into English by Lama Kazi Dawa Samdup. It was annotated by Evans-Wentz and published by the University of Oxford. However, the lama's book *Yoga and Secret Doctrines* also contains a shorter summary treatise on the Bardo.
The Bardo signifies a transitional state. Just as sleep at night is the transition between yesterday's and today's waking states, so too is the Bardo the transition between two lives: the night of the afterlife's journey. According to the teachings of Bon, the Vedas and later Buddhism, the soul only returns to its final resting place after death if it has redeemed itself. In Bon, the mysteries of the Straight Path, and particularly chöd, assist the individual in this redemption. Those who have been immersed in the material and sensory world, who have never awakened to reality, who have not sought to attain mindfulness, who have not practised asceticism, who have not meditated regularly, and who have not been religious, will remain in samsara after death just as they did in this life. There is only one brief moment when the possibility of liberation opens up for the soul: the moment of death. The Bardo states that when a person dies, for a very brief moment—for the alert, as long as it takes to eat a meal; for the drowsy, the sick, and the weak, as long as it takes to snap one's fingers—the gateway to liberation opens. The spirit of the Supreme Being, like the Radiant Primordial Light, welcomes those who pass into the afterlife. All boundaries crumble, all inhibitions cease, all doors swing open. During this time, the human soul may return unhindered to its ancestral home, the realm of the Supreme Being.
Most souls, however, are dazed and sleepy and do not know what is happening to them. They are startled by the radiant light, hide away, fear, and shrink back. And then they are lost. They have failed to grasp the hand the Supreme Being has extended towards them. They have not recognised reality. They have not understood that they, the soul

itself, is nothing other than light, primordial light, radiance, brightness, reality, a spark of the Supreme Being. And because it did not understand, it missed its chance at liberation; it sinks back into illusion, into stupor, into samsara, and must continue its wandering. The Bardo begins: the wandering in the afterlife. The soul floats amidst its own illusions, terrified, afraid, repulsed, trembling, anxious, and wanting to hide. Where? Back into the womb? It still believes that safety lies only in the material world. It strains every fibre to enter the woman's womb and be reborn. When this is finally achieved, the transitional state ceases. The soul has returned to earth.

To understand the external circumstances of the Bardo Thodol, suffice it to say this: when a person reaches the point of agony, the family brings in the patient's guru, or, if this is not possible for some reason, another lama. The lama, holding the Bardo Thodol in his hand, sits beside the dying person and observes the moments of passing. When the human soul reaches the threshold of the afterlife, he begins to read from the book. In their death throes, the dying person needs help from someone who maintains their awareness and reminds them of what they must do. For those who have been initiated into the mystery of the Bardo during their lifetime, the task is easier: they recognise the significance of the events unfolding within them. But even those who have not been initiated can be influenced. They too can recognise the Primordial Light and be liberated. In the Bardo, it is much easier to step out of samsara than in the earthly world, because the human soul is not bound by the illusions of the material world. The opportunity for the wanderer to awaken exists at every moment. And so the guru, or the lama, who sits beside the dying or the dead and who is in constant contact with the consciousness of the soul in the afterlife, continually instructs: do not be afraid, do not be weak, realise that what surrounds you is your own illusion, it has no reality – there is only one reality, the Primordial Light, and that is you.

The mystery of the Bardo lasts for forty-two days. The number itself is significant. In the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead', too, forty-two judges pass judgement on the soul of the deceased. However, the significance of this cannot be discussed here at present. The lama sits beside the deceased for forty-two days and guides the soul wandering in the afterlife. He instructs the soul on what to do, how to behave, how to pray, and to whom to pray. This teaching is the Bardo Thodol. The present text discusses only the most important stages of the journey through the afterlife. These stages are: the moment of death, the experience of reality, and the journey towards rebirth.

The Bardo Thodol is the most significant of the well-known works of Tibetan mysticism. At the same time, however the the entire globe the one of the deepest

Holy Book. It is not open to criticism, only to interpretation. It belongs to that category of books which exist not so that man may judge us, but so that they may judge man. However, there is still much we do not know about Tibetan mysticism. Lama monasteries hold many thousands of secret manuscripts, of which European travellers, such as most recently Madame David-Neel, have only heard. The lamas, however, remain silent.

The atmosphere of Tibetan mysteries seems alien to the European mind and, in many respects, incomprehensible. Those essential treatises which deal with the tumo, the fire of life, or dreams, or the transmission of the consciousness of the dead, are for the most part filled with technical instructions. It is disappointing, the white man thinks to himself, that instead of excitement, these Tibetans constantly talk about nerve centres, letters, syllables, breathing techniques, sitting postures and deliberately induced visions. He notes with surprise that the tone of the discourses is sober and nothing could be further from them than the piety which the European regards as an indispensable component of mysticism. This mysticism is neither soft nor sentimental. Effeminate emotions find no satisfaction here, and even less so the thirst for sensation. This mysticism is infinitely determined, realistic, composed, cool, dry and rock-hard. It is the mysticism of the heroic soul, which created the mysteries not for amusement or sport, but for life and death, irrevocably staking its fate.

Each of these mysteries is a practice. Metaphysics is absent, for it goes without saying. And metaphysics is not, as one might suppose and as is generally believed in Europe, Buddhism, but rather: the Veda. Bön is a magical praxis, the foundation and meaning of which is the Veda. The unspoken secret of every mystery is the Veda's teaching that: there is but one reality, the soul, and all that appears to exist outside the soul is illusion, maya. The practice itself is such an illusion. Merely a Symbol. For the aim of the Bon practice is liberation from illusion; and for the ascetic who has fully awakened – says the Pho-wa – 'wandering and liberation are nothing more than an image written in empty air, dissolving of its own accord, devoid of meaning'. The symbol has unheard-of significance in samsara, in illusion, as every symbol does. The letter A, the Om, the Hum, the gestures, the words. The greatest symbol is the sacred phrase: Om mani padme hum. The student meditates on symbolic phrases. The goal: to decipher the world's great symbol and awaken to reality.

All mysteries all practices seek to achieve one single thing:

to bring about clarity, to awaken, to break free from illusion, to dispel maya. In this awakening, the ascetic needs no knowledge other than the mysteries of Bön. The Tibetans, just like the Hindus, draw a sharp line between knowledge and awareness. Knowledge is of a material nature; the Hindus call it vidya; in Tibetan: rtogpas. This is a completely useless worldly illusion. The ascetic needs not knowledge, but awareness. This is: rtogspa; in Sanskrit: vidya.

Mysteries do not enrich a person with knowledge. After experiencing such a mystery, no one knows any more. But they become all the more alert. And this is what the treatise seeks to achieve. This is what the practice also seeks to achieve. The European believes that he must attain and accumulate material knowledge. The Eastern man knows that knowledge is merely a burden and an obstacle. What man truly needs is: mindfulness.

To attain enlightenment, a specific branch of knowledge is required, one that is entirely foreign to us. This knowledge comprises: the manner of sitting; the evocation of images through which the ascetic consciously influences himself; the evocation of symbols; and ecstatic meditation. The mysteries must therefore be unerringly precise. They are. Nowhere on earth can such unique psychological knowledge be found, not even approximately. The systematic practices of these mysteries have been perfected by a tradition stretching back many thousands of years. Compared to this, European psychology is not even in its infancy. What is manifested, for example, in the tumo is such an intense technique for the elimination of the so-called unconscious that even Hindu tantra or kundalini yoga are rudimentary by comparison. And what appears in the transfer of the consciousness of the dead is such a leap in magical psychological practice that no one has found anything comparable among any people. This is Pho-wa, the technical skill by which the ascetic can take over the consciousness of the dead, or expel the consciousness from any human body and replace it with another. Every mystery is perilous, but this is the most dangerous of them all. No one has ever attempted this practice without the guidance of a guru possessing sufficient knowledge, for in this mystery the human consciousness must cross the very same fatal thresholds as the dead. The Pho-wat is used only in exceptional cases, when one wishes to forcibly awaken the dazed consciousness of the deceased. The ability by which the tulkus, the great lamas, are able to monitor the incarnation of the Dalai Lama also rests on one of the practices of the Pho-wa.

The purpose of the mysteries of the is to awaken the . This awakening of the is achieved through the discipline

, by completely detaching themselves from the visible sensory world with formidable consistency. This detachment is not an end in itself. The goal is liberation, a return to the Great Void, the primordial state of the soul. The Tibetan ascetic has no other task. The mysteries of Bön do not build anything, they only dismantle. This is the basis of Tibetan practices: there is nothing to hold on to, everything must be destroyed.

The European is characterised by mastery over the material world. The Eastern by mastery over the spiritual world. And the extreme of the Eastern man, who stands furthest from the European, is the Tibetan, who does not shy away from violence in the exercise of mastery over the spiritual world.

However, the fact that, for some thirty years now, an increasing number of Eastern and thus Tibetan works have been appearing in European languages is significant. The better part of Europe is beginning to find dominion over the material world poor and unworthy. It goes to the East to learn. And it cannot overlook Tibet. For despite all the distances that separate us, there is also a connecting link. The great Tibetan saint Padmasambhava said: ‘Know everything, examine everything.’ And the Apostle Paul writes, in almost the same words: ‘Know everything, examine everything, and whatever is good, hold on to it.’

OM MANI PADME HUM

(The syllable ‘Om’ is a symbol of creation. The word itself is of Sanskrit origin and was written as ‘Aum’. The first letter signifies Brahma, the creator; the second, Vishnu, the preserver; the third, Shiva, the destroyer. Its secret meaning, however, is different. The letter A signifies the divine Self, the immortal soul; U signifies the human Self, the mortal body; M signifies the connection between the two Selves, this life. A is the eternal world, U is this Earth, M is time, which connects the two. With a single breath, the sacred syllable utters the greatest mystery of existence: I live here on Earth, bound to fate and time, but my true being is the eternal, immortal soul.

Mani padme means ‘lotus jewel’. This lotus jewel is the human soul. The lotus flower represents the cosmos; within it, the diamond is the Self. According to the initiates, the lotus is a symbol of eternal life, and the radiant jewel is the saved soul.

Hum first of all means: so be it. But it is actually an active word, which emphasises Om once more and with great force. Some explain it as a battle cry: a declaration of war against stupidity, unbelief, anger, passion and the darkness of evil. In Tibetan script, the symbol for Hum is a circle from which a tongue of flame shoots upwards, with the crescent of the waxing moon beneath it. The explanation of this symbol is as follows:

"The circle ending in a mountain [the tongue of flame rising upwards into space] is the embodiment of the Buddha, the Supreme Being, seated at the centre of the world.

The crescent moon is the symbol of the immovable and unshakeable, of mirror-like wisdom.

The tip of the flame is born of the Precious Stone, a symbol of the wisdom that regards all living beings as equal.

The breath of H is the symbol of boundless and intangible Light, the wisdom of discernment.

The fading breath of H is the symbol of the Almighty Power, the wisdom that brings things to an end.

The symbol of Hum expresses the five orders of nature and the Buddha."

The sacred seven syllables are pronounced using a ritual breathing method learned over a long period of time. Each syllable has different rules for exhalation and inhalation.

The colour of Om [A-um] is white and relates to the gods.

The colour of Ma is blue and relates to the titans.

The colour of Ni is yellow and it relates to humans. The colour of Pad is green and it relates to animals.

The colour of Me is red and it relates to demons.
The colour of Hum is black and it pertains to the inhabitants of hell.
However, the seven syllables are not only associated with the seven colours, but also with the seven notes of the musical scale, the seven planets, Brahma's seven sons, the seven rishis, the seven sages, and the seven days of the week.
The sacred syllables are usually repeated one hundred and eight times in succession, because the Tibetan rosary has one hundred and eight beads.)

DAILY PRACTICE

The ancient teaching known as Dam-ngag lana med pa, meaning ‘There is nothing higher than this’, requires the student to perform four meditations every day. The first should be performed at sunrise, the second at midday, the third at sunset, and the fourth before going to sleep.

At sunrise, the subject of meditation should be how the unfathomable chain of causes and effects, which is experienced in the perceptible world, arises from the world beyond the senses, from the Great Void. The chain of causes and effects is nothing other than the material world. And the world is an illusion. Reality is that which precedes the world: the invisible, inexperienceable, intangible Void. This is Nirvana.

At midday, the subject of meditation should be three sentences. These three sentences are: My body is like a mountain.

My eyes are like the ocean. My mind is

like the sky.

The guru tells the student nothing else but these three sentences. Deep secrets are hidden in the similes, but the student must discover these secrets for themselves.

If, in response to the sentence ‘My body is like a mountain’, the disciple says: “The mountain is lashed by the storm – just as my body is lashed by the countless impressions of the material world – and just as the mountain remains motionless in the storm, so too must my body remain unmoved amidst the impressions of the external world,” then the master merely smiles and says: all this is very petty and schoolboyish. One must not construct theories, but experience reality directly.

If, in response to the phrase ‘My eyes are like the ocean’, the student says: “The ocean lies like a mirror – it reflects the sun, the moon, the stars, every image of the world, whilst remaining motionless itself – so must my consciousness reflect the world motionlessly, undisturbed by passions” – then the master merely smiles again and says: this is quite a good teaching, but the secret phrase does not seek to teach, but to enlighten. Just keep thinking about it.

If the student, in response to the phrase ‘My spirit is like the sky’, says the following: ‘In the immeasurable emptiness of the sky, a cloud forms – the cloud drifts east, west, north, south, and finally dissolves – thus

every thought, intention and feeling forms in my mind, passes through my life and then dissolves" – then the master simply smiles again and says: this explanation is like a teacher lecturing in school during a religious debate. Religious debates belong in school. Now it is not a matter of repeating foreign thoughts and words, but of independent realisation. This is what must be achieved.

At sunset, the student devotes their time to breathing exercises. With both exhalation and inhalation, they link certain thoughts together rhythmically; when exhaling, they think: "Dullness arises, but it disappears"; when inhaling, they think: "Dullness also dissolves into the Great Void". The student must discipline their thoughts precisely and regularly, and during the breathing exercises, they must think only of these two alternating phrases.

Before falling asleep, at bedtime, the student assumes the ascetic's posture known as 'the sleeping lion'. He lies on his right side, rests his head in his right palm, and places his left leg upon his right. In this position, he must visualise a lotus flower blooming within an octagonal crystal at the seat of his heart. The crystal radiates the sacred colours: white, red, green, blue and yellow. In the centre of the lotus flower sits the letter A, the symbol of the beginning of all things, the sign of the eternal, immortal, imperishable soul. Countless tiny letters A pour forth from the letter. On exhalation, the letters flow out; on inhalation, the person draws them in again. The mind must not stray from this image. It is in this cycle that the student must fall asleep.

THE STRAIGHT PATH

Padmasambhava, the great guru's teaching on the stages of the Direct Path:
Read every book that deals with religion, thought, the spirit and the soul. Do not be swayed by the outward forms, rules, customs or rituals of any particular religion. Learn everything and examine everything. Listen to the words of thinkers, priests, sages and ascetics. Do not discard anything. Experience the thoughts fully, identify with them, and only judge them once you have moved beyond them.

From the many teachings, choose just one for yourself and, with firm resolve, irrevocably set the rest aside, just as the eagle snatches but a single lamb from the flock and lets the rest go.

Be content with modest living conditions. Be reserved and humble. Do not be pushy. Keep your distance from the great figures of the world. It is only through insignificant external circumstances that a person's thoughts can reach the highest heights and rise above all the splendour and glory of the earth.

Be free from desire, indifferent and unperturbed. Feed on whatever chance brings your way. Do not be choosy. Do not strive to hold on to anything. Wealth, poverty, praise, contempt—let them come; they will pass anyway. Make no distinction between virtue and sin, between fame and disgrace, between good and evil. Avoid sorrow, grief and guilt. Whatever you have done, there is no cause for either joy or pain.

Observe the strife of humanity, the diversity of opinions, the battle of passions calmly and without passion. Think to yourself: behold, this is the order of nature, and behold the manifold human Self. See the world as one who stands on a mountain peak and looks down into the deep valley.

You must attain that state in which you realise within yourself the feeling of the great empty space. He who knows the great empty space within himself has cast off his Self. He sees no Self in things, nor in people, nor in himself. If there is no Self, there is no desire, no passion, no wish, no goal, no intention, no thought, no feeling, no will. This liberation is the final stage of the Straight Path.

ROLANG

Whoever wishes to attain supernatural power must acquire the tongue of a dead person, which places the power of invisible forces into their hands. The method of acquisition is the dance of the rolang, which the sorcerer must perform as follows:

According to the records of ancient texts, in times of old every lama was able to acquire the ability to move the dead even after the soul had departed. This ability forms the basis of the rolang dance.

The sorcerer locks himself away alone with the dead body in a dark room. He must undress the dead person and remove all his own clothes as well. He should lay the body on its back on the floor and stretch its arms out to either side. Once the arms are stretched out, he should lie down on top of the dead body, ensuring that he covers it completely.

Now recite the mantra or incantation appropriate for this occasion. The first recitation must be barely audible; you must whisper it, breathing the words slowly and very distinctly into the mouth of the deceased. Focus your thoughts with the greatest possible intensity on the meaning of the mantra, on the deceased, and on the goal to be achieved.

Bear in mind that the slightest distraction of your thoughts or waning of your strength will betray the deceased, and at that moment all will be lost.

The mantra must first be recited slowly, in a whisper, and with clear articulation. It must be breathed directly into the mouth of the deceased. On the second recitation, it should be spoken only slightly louder, but great care must be taken with the intonation, the sharp articulation and the clarity of meaning. Upon the third recitation of the mantra, the deceased will stir.

One must pay close attention to the dead person's tremors. The dead person opens their eyes, a shudder runs through them, and a faint tremor can be felt throughout their body. The sorcerer must observe all these signs keenly, whilst not ceasing to recite the mantra for a single moment.

The trembling in the dead person's body grows stronger. He wants to free himself from the sorcerer's grip, but the sorcerer must not let go for a single moment. If the dead man slips from his grasp, he will fall prey to the dead man. The dead man mainly wants to twist his head, because he wants to free himself from the power of the mantra. The sorcerer must be very careful about this.

The dead person tries to break free with small jerks. The jerks grow stronger, the corpse begins to writhe and twist, and if nothing works,

it will spring up. This is the decisive and most difficult moment. The dead person begins to dance, making frantic movements with their legs, head and hands in an attempt to break free. It leaps high, throws itself to the ground, dashes about the room and hurls its body into the air. The sorcerer must not let go for a single moment. He must recite the mantra with the utmost mental effort between the corpse's lips, growing louder and louder, until finally shouting.

Sweat eventually pours from the corpse in streams; it slumps from exhaustion, gasps for breath, and its tongue hangs out.

The moment of action has now arrived. It is best to grasp the tongue with the right hand, whilst supporting oneself with the left hand, which is clamped around the dead person's throat. This is the easiest way to tear out the tongue. Once the corpse has lost its tongue, it falls to the ground and does not move again.

TRANSFER OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE DEAD

(PHO-WA)

The Refuge

I seek refuge in my divine guide; may he be my protector.
May he protect me from this moment onwards until I attain liberation.
O you wanderers, you who are lost in delusion,
dedicate yourselves to enlightenment, so that you
may all be liberated!

The vision of the goddess and the guru The image of the vision for personal use:

Give up the image and form of your body. Free your mind from all sensory forms and visualise the mind in its primordial nature, as pure radiance. This radiance now takes the form of Vajra-Yogini, the guardian goddess of ascetics. Her body is red; she has a face and two hands. In her right hand, she holds a curved knife above her head; in her left hand, she presses a skull filled with blood to her breast. She leans against a white pillar, which she embraces with her left arm. She wears the five symbolic ornaments and is adorned with jewellery. She stands upon a lotus-flower throne, which in turn rises from a sun disc. The sun rests upon a human corpse. The goddess's demeanour is reverent and humble. The figure is surrounded by a halo formed from rays of wisdom.

High above your head, in the sky, imagine your Chief Guide on a lotus-flower throne, on the rim of the waxing moon. Your Guide's body is blue in colour; they have a face and two hands, and wear the broad cloak of the saved. Across their chest, in their crossed hands, they hold the ascetic's sceptre and the small bell.

Imagine a rainbow burning in five colours directly above your head. The same rainbow shines above your Leader's head as well.

Prayer to the Guide

A prayer to the Leader:

I pray to you, Lord, who holds in your hand the symbols of divine power and the sceptre, who dwells in the realm of truth, from which there is no return to this world of birth and death; there you dwell in pure vision, in the world of the awakened Buddha; with deep faith and humility I pray to you, I who am your son. Allow me to step onto the path of the transmission of consciousness and

. With your help, may I reach the heavenly realms, the highest paradise, the realm of the eternal, unchanging Being.

Meditation

Once you have recited this prayer several times with deep devotion, imagine the following: First, consider this: I wish to lead every sentient being, flooding the world in infinite numbers, to perfection. No one will or can be saved until a single soul wanders in delusion and illusion. We must wait for one another and return again and again, as long as there is a single brother or sister still wandering. No one can be happy whilst a single suffering soul remains in the world. And my aim now, too, is to help, now that I am stepping onto the profoundly mysterious path of consciousness transfer.

There is also an accompanying image for this thought. This accompanying image is:

I contemplate the image of my Guide. He is my protector. He is in the heavenly realm and watches over me from there. The countless sentient beings flooding the world are all under his protection until the moment when the very last being has attained liberation and everyone has returned to the Supreme Being. Let the goal of all our lives be to reach the highest point of the path of light.

At the end of the meditation, take on the form of the guru completely and identify yourself with him without reservation.

The Contemplation of the Goddess

See your own body as a completely empty space. Let your mind produce no images and be completely empty. From this void, let Vajra Yogini suddenly emerge, adorned with jewels, blood-red, in the radiance of rays of light. Imagine the central nerve in the centre of her body, as thin as a reed. The reed-shaped central nerve is closed at the bottom and ends in four fingers below the navel, above the groin. The upper part is open and extends outwards through the crown of the head.

In the centre of the reed, near the heart, imagine a four-petalled lotus and a single point upon it. This point symbolises the connection between the breath and consciousness. Its colour is light pink.

These images should be very vivid and clear.

Imagine your Chief Guide at the top of your head. Pray to him and confess to him, whilst your hair rises towards the sky and tears stream from your eyes, with deep humility and with all your heart. When you have finished your prayer, you will see that the sacred syllable HUM appears in blue near the Guide’s heart. Now cry out the syllable HIK aloud. At the same time, the dot on the Goddess’s heart will begin to jump, and the dot will rise to the area of the Leader’s heart. Once the two dots have united, remain

in this state and hold on. Now shout the syllable KA and you will see that the dot returns to the Goddess's heart. Now shout the syllable HIK again and then the syllable KA again. Repeat this twenty-one times. Within the space of a day, the transfer of consciousness takes place. The external signs are as follows: the muscles and skin on the top of your head swell. The swelling must be pricked with a straw. A yellowish, slimy fluid oozes out of it. Once you have achieved this, it is unnecessary to continue the exercise.

Once you have finished the exercise, imagine that the goddess and the Guide are holding a vessel in their hands. The vessel contains the drink of the gods, amrita. You will feel your whole body filling with the drink of the blessed. Recite the mantra written for this occasion several times, and you will feel yourself completely detaching from your body, becoming immaterial and flying away like a bird.

This is the part of the teaching on the transfer of consciousness that

may be written down. For those who have not yet attained

complete liberation

Those who have not attained complete liberation of the spirit

:

The request for protection and the resolution must be repeated several times. Then imagine that in your mind, which is now completely empty and clear, the departed has become invisible in the reality of the body.

Now imagine the goddess, in the centre of her body, perpendicular to the midline, as before. Imagine the syllable HUM, drawn with the finest precision, floating in the place of the goddess's heart, which now symbolises the departed's consciousness.

On top of the departed's skull, at the Brahma-hole, imagine a lotus-flower throne. Above it, the crescent of the waxing moon, a five-coloured rainbow, which surrounds the entire image in a halo of glory. Now imagine the syllable HUM in blue at the place of the Guide's heart. Pray deeply and intimately and ask the Guide to permit the transfer of consciousness.

Keep in mind that, as you utter the syllable HIK, the blue HUM in the Leader's heart slowly descends and gradually reaches the heart of the departed. At the same time, the red HUM, which is in the place of the goddess's heart and symbolises the departed's consciousness, slowly rises. In the first exercise, the HUM reaches the departed's heart. In the second exercise, it reaches the Leader's heart, and then the blue and red HUM merge.

This state is followed by spiritual elevation. Take good care. Persevere in this state.

Now apply the rituals of devotion and turning towards the path of truth.

For the more alert

Those more experienced in the faith, that is, the more alert, practise the transfer of the dead's consciousness in the following manner:

Place your mind in absolute stillness. When the mind is empty and clear, pray, recite the words of seeking refuge and making a vow. Pray repeatedly to the Spiritual Masters. Only when this has been done should you make contact with the departed's mind. You will find connection only through the guru's pure mind. When this has been done, unite your mind with the Supreme Being. Chant the sacred syllable PHAT. Once you have attained perfect, pure Emptiness, remain in this state.

For those whose mindfulness is developed

Those who have realised Emptiness and pure tranquillity in their consciousness have already transcended the difficulties that constituted obstacles for those of lower awareness. These ascetics already know that there is no essential difference between the consciousness of the Guide, the goddess, the living and the dead.

If, during meditation, the ascetic has realised tranquillity and pure light within himself, he will experience that the spirit has no beginning and no end. For such an ascetic, wandering in illusion and liberation are nothing more than an insignificant image written in empty air, which dissipates of its own accord.

This ascetic has already crossed the boundary within which life and death still have any significance. Precisely for this reason, there is no rule regarding the transmission of consciousness for him.

The person who made this record did so in order to help as many wandering souls as possible to attain liberation.

TUMO

The Teaching on the Fire of the Soul

The teaching on the fire of the soul consists of three parts: preparation, practice and practical application.

There are five exercises in the preparation: in the first exercise, one must imagine the human body as an empty space; in the second, one must imagine the nervous system as an empty space; in the third, one must visualise the magic circle; in the fourth, the nerve pathways must be thoroughly worked out; in the fifth, one must learn to channel the celestial currents into the nervous system and the soul.

The dissolution of the human body

The very first exercise in the preparations is to imagine the human body as an empty space; this is done as follows:

To begin with, recite the prayer that unites your spirit with the Celestial Guide.

Imagine that you are the holy, devout goddess of ascetics: Vajra-Yogini. The goddess's colour is a brilliant red, like a sparkling ruby. She has a single face, two hands and three eyes. With her right hand, she brandishes a sparkling curved knife above her head; with this knife, she cuts away the thoughts that disturb the ascetic's mind. With her left hand, she holds a human skull filled to the brim with blood against her breast. Those who are in the goddess's favour live in ceaseless, profound peace. On her head is a five-pointed crown; each point is a human skull. Her necklace consists of fifty human heads dripping with blood. She wears five of the six symbolic jewels; she does not possess the ointment made from the ashes of the cemetery. In the crook of her arm she holds a long staff, the symbol of the guardian deity Heruka. The goddess wears no clothing; she is in the fullness of her beauty, like a sixteen-year-old girl. She dances. Her right leg bends and swings into the air. With her left foot, she stands on the chest of a reclining human body. The radiant glory of wisdom shines around her.

Imagine that you are this goddess! Divine on the outside, yet empty within, as empty as the inside of a shroud, beneath which there is nothing. The void is transparent and clear. The entire form is empty, empty right down to the tip of her little finger, like an empty tent, like an inflated bladder.

Imagine the goddess's form to be about the size of yourself; then imagine her to be the size of a house; then the size of a mountain; finally, as large as the whole earth. Strain every fibre of your mind

and do not let go of the image for a single moment!
Now bring the image together slowly, very slowly. Make sure its sharp outline remains! Don't stop until the figure is as small as a sesame seed! Now bring it together even more. Don't let go of this image for a single second!

The elimination of the nervous system

The second exercise in the preparations is to imagine the nervous system as an empty space. This is done as follows:
Imagine your body as the goddess of ascetics, the divine Yogini. Imagine the central nerve running perfectly perpendicular to the body's central axis. The nerve is red like red varnish, shining like a sesame oil lamp, straight as the central axis of a banana, and hollow inside like a roll of paper. The image should be about the size of a medium-sized arrow.
Stretch this image to be as large as a stick; then, as a house; then, as a mountain; finally, as the whole earth.
Imagine that this image encompasses every part of your body, right down to the tip of your little finger.
Once you have shrunk the image to the size of a sesame seed, do not forget that it is hollow inside; then shrink it to a hundredth of the tip of a hair.
The ancient text says:
"See the empty space within the uncertain, for it is so small.
See the empty space in the intangible, for the eye cannot see it. See the
empty space in the incomprehensible, for it is fleeting."

The magic circle

The third exercise in the preparations is the contemplation of the magic circle.
This has three stages: posture, breathing and the discipline of thoughts.
The first stage is posture, which has two steps, and in these two steps all the secrets of the body and the soul are revealed.
When breathing, one must ensure that one exhales the spent air three times and then pushes the inhaled fresh air to the innermost corners of the lungs; the diaphragm must be raised slightly so that the expanded chest resembles a closed earthenware pot. One must hold one's breath for as long as possible.
When disciplining the mind, as you exhale, you must imagine that countless five-coloured rays are radiating from every pore of the body. These

Rays of light bathe the whole world in radiance. When the ascetic inhales, he takes in this luminous air, and thus he himself becomes filled with radiance.
These two exercises must be repeated seven times.
Now imagine that this five-coloured beam of light transforms into the sacred syllable HUM. When the ascetic exhales, the HUM flows out of him and the world is filled with the resonance of the sacred syllable; when he inhales, it permeates his entire body. This too must be repeated seven times.
Now imagine that the HUM transforms into the army of the gods of wrath. Each god has a face and two hands. In their raised right hand, each grasps a sceptre and waves it above their head. They press their left hand threateningly to their heart. The left leg is stiff, the right leg bent. The face is wrathful. It burns with five colours. Not a single ray of colour is thicker than a sesame seed.
When you exhale, you release the gods of wrath from within yourself, and the world is filled with deities.
When you breathe in, they penetrate you and fill you to the brim.
Repeat this exercise seven times, so that together with the previous ones, you have now completed a total of twenty-one exercises.
Now imagine that in every pore of your body sits a god of anger. Their faces are turned outwards. The gods are thus positioned on your skin as if encasing you in armour.

Developing the nerve pathways

The fourth preparatory exercise is the development of the nerve pathways. It is as follows:
Imagine that the main nerve on the right side of the body runs to the right of the median nerve, and the main nerve on the left side runs to the left of the median nerve. The two nerves begin at the tip of the ascetic's nose, run up to the head, descend down the back to the buttocks, curve back and end in the centre between the two groin areas.
Imagine that these two nerves are hollow inside. In the left-hand nerve, visualise the following letters: A, A, I, I, U, U, RI, RI, LI, LI, E, EI, O, OU, ANG, A.
In the nerve on the right, imagine the following letters: KA, KHA, GA, GHA, NGA, CHA, CHHA, JA, JHA, NYA, TA, THA, DA, DHA, NA, TA, THA, DA, DHA, NA, PA, PHA, BA, BHA, MA, YA, LA, VA, SHA, KSHA, SA, HA, KSHYA.
Imagine these letters written in red ink. They are as delicate as the veins of a lotus flower. They stand in a perpendicular order, one above the other. As you exhale, imagine that these letters are arranged in the order

flow from your nostrils into the world and, as you inhale, return to you through the genital opening between your two groins.
Remain in this state. Direct your consciousness towards the letters as if they were fireflies, and practise alternate nostril breathing, inhaling alternately through the right and left nostrils.
This exercise is like an ascetic creating the source of a great river, and for this very reason it is extremely important.

The channelling of celestial currents

The fifth preparatory exercise is the channelling of celestial currents into the soul and the nerves. The method is as follows:
Imagine your spiritual Guide sitting in full glory at the centre of the main nerve, which is about the size of a medium-sized straw. Above his head, imagine another guide, then another, making a total of six, in remembrance of the six great teachings. The six guides are arranged in a circle. Carefully place yourself in the centre of the circle.
Now recite the prayer of the six teachings:
"Open your currents to me, Heavenly Guides, so that I may realise all four great powers within my consciousness.
Grant me the ability to see all visible and existing things in their divine origin.
Grant that my nerves may be filled with your power. Grant
that the fire of the soul may be kindled within me.
Grant that my physical body, which is but an illusion, may become the reality of the spirit.
I offer this heavy physical body, made of illusion, to you.
Grant that the images of the dream's magic may not take hold of me, and open for me the light of wakefulness.
Grant that I may recognise the pure, ancient light within myself.
Grant that I may purify my consciousness of all illusions and reach the garden of the blessed.
Grant that I may attain the pure light of enlightenment in this very life.
Shower your light upon me, that I may attain the highest goal: Enlightenment, Nirvana."
"Grant that every experience, quality, thought and phenomenon within me may be transformed into the sacred fire of the soul.
Grant that I may recognise and cast off the illusion of the material world.

Grant that all my faculties may be transformed into pure light. Grant that all my faculties may be transformed into the Holy Trinity. Grant that I may rise to ever purer heights.
Grant me the strength to attain the highest goal."
After the prayer, visualise the image of the Leaders placed above projected onto the image of the Leader at the very bottom. Imagine the Leaders entering together into the realm of inexhaustible bliss. This bliss will permeate your body.
This concludes the teaching on the preparatory exercises.

The practice

The three fundamental practices of the second part of the teaching on the fire of the soul
are:
The soul of the , the soul fire experiencing and the understanding the supernatural fire of the soul.

Developing the fire of the soul

For the first exercise, the development of the fire of the soul, the following are essential: control over posture, control over calm and vigorous breathing, and control over consciously visualised images.
The ancient texts say the following about control over posture:
"Assume the Buddha posture. Position the spine so that each vertebra rests precisely upon the next. Expand the diaphragm as much as you can. Close the oesophagus tightly so that, with your head tilted forward, your chin touches your neck. Place your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Place your hands below the navel so that the palms are perpendicular to the thighs. Without altering the position of your face or the flow of your thoughts, establish a connection between your thoughts and your breathing, and above all, remain the master of the images of your consciousness."
The Buddha posture is nothing other than the state of the body that corresponds to complete enlightenment; that is, the body can only attain perfect mindfulness in this posture.
However, the ascetic may also assume the siddha posture with crossed legs. Another application could be as follows:
Sit down and cross your right leg over your left, as in the Buddha position. Place your hands perpendicular to the floor just below your navel, so that your upper body is supported by the bones of your lower back. Arrange your vertebrae as if stacking coins on top of one another. Expand your diaphragm as much as possible, and press your chin against your throat. Rest your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Fix your gaze firmly on the tip of your nose or the edge of your field of vision.

In all other respects, always adhere to what has been said. Now, however, assume the siddha posture with your legs crossed, take out your meditation mat, fold it twice so that its circumference is roughly the same as your head. Place the book under your knees so that you can rest your body on it. Take out the small cushion you use for meditation as well. This should be a foot wide, four fingers thick, well-stuffed and plump.

Breathing

The second part of the exercise on developing the fire of the soul has two sections: calm breathing and intense breathing. The former is natural, the latter artificial.

Calm breathing can be practised in two ways. One exercise is called the ninefold expansion, the other the fourfold combined breath.

During the ninefold expansion, one must take three breaths through the right nostril. Whilst breathing, the head must be slowly turned from right to left. Then one must take three breaths through the left nostril, whilst slowly turning the head from left to right. Finally, take three breaths through both nostrils: this time, do not move your head. Inhale the air so calmly and quietly that it is barely noticeable. Repeat this three times more vigorously, turning your head, and then three times more.

The nine breaths must be repeated three times.

When performing the basic exercise of the fourfold combined breath, pay attention to the following:

Keep your head facing forwards.

Let your chest take on the shape of a pot.

Your breath should not be interrupted, but linked together into a single flow.

Push the air out of yourself like an arrow.

The ancients also said:

"Inhale, fill, balance, and expel the air
again.
These are the four essential
exercises; whoever cannot link
them together
Rushes into danger and their strength turns
to harm". To explain the above:

Inhalation is when one draws in air silently from a distance of sixteen inches.

Filling is when, whilst maintaining a seated position, one expands the chest into a bowl shape, tenses the diaphragm, and pumps fresh air into every tiny alveolus of the lungs.
If you can no longer hold the pot pose, shorten your breath and fill your lungs completely with air on both the right and left sides. This is called equalisation.
If you can no longer maintain the balancing, expel the air through both nostrils. Begin this exercise very calmly and quietly, gradually increasing the intensity, applying more and more tension, then returning to a gentler pace. This is called arrow-like breathing.

Vigorous breathing

The second exercise required to develop the fire of the soul, rapid breathing, consists of five parts:
control over the bubbling expulsion of the breath, so that one may prevent the air from flowing back;
control over inhalation, so that one may draw in the air through all the natural and appropriate bodily orifices;
control over the expansion of the lungs to the greatest possible extent, so that one may command the breath;
control over exhalation, so that one may direct the vital forces contained in the air into the nerves;
control over the reduction of the breath, so that one may establish a connection between the inner and outer spiritual forces.

Contemplation of inner images

The third part of the teaching on the development of the fire of the soul concerns mastery over the contemplation of inner images. This has three aspects: the outer fire of the soul, the inner fire of the soul, and the hidden fire of the soul.
Regarding the outer fire of the soul, the ancients say:
“Imagine your own heavy material body, which is made up of illusion, and at the same time your Guardian Deity.”
So imagine your own body, but completely empty inside, and the guardian deity of the ascetics in the size of a human body.
Regarding the inner fire of the soul, the ancients say:
“Imagine four spokes in the shape of an umbrella or a cartwheel.” So imagine the central nerve hollow inside, like a mere thin shell. The empty space is the symbol of the visible world. Its colour is red, for this is the colour of salvation; it is transparent and radiant, since its activity and task is to illuminate

. When it stands perpendicular to the ground, it is the symbol of the Tree of Life. Imagine this image on a scale such that it extends from the top of your head, the Brahma-hole, to about a finger's breadth below your navel. The two ends of the nerve are smooth and flat. To the right and left, like the intestines of a lean sheep, run the right and left nerves, and these, passing over the brain, extend to the front of the face, ending there at the two openings of the nose. Imagine the lower ends of these two accessory nerves in the shape of a horizontal figure of eight.

Now imagine the thirty-two accessory nerves running downwards from these three nerve trunks; imagine a further sixteen nerves running upwards from the nerve centre in the neck; eight running downwards again from the cardiac nerve centre, and sixty-four running upwards from the navel. Now imagine the groups of auxiliary nerves as if they were the ribs of a parasol or the spokes of a wheel. The axis of the auxiliary nerves is the three main nerves.

Proceed in this manner in your

contemplation. The Hidden Fire

The ancients taught the following about the hidden fire:

"Let the object of your meditation be the letter A. This letter is the symbol of the feminine nature of the world. The secret of liberating the fire of the soul is hidden within this symbol."

Imagine half the letter A at the point where the right, left and central nerves meet, four finger-widths below the navel, with contours as fine as a hair, floating; it should be no larger than half an inch, reddish-brown in colour, fiery and hot; the letter undulates like a rope hanging in the wind. From time to time, this sound is heard from the letter: 'Phem! Phem!'

Now visualise the letter HAM in the central nerve, white in colour, at the crown of your head, within the thousand-petalled lotus. From the letter drips amrita, the drink of the blessed.

Now follow the inhalation, so that the life force spreads through the right and left nerves.

Inflate the nerves as if they were filled with air. The central nerve draws the life force from them, and it is this force that colours half of the hair-thin letter A red.

During the 'filling' and 'balancing' stages, focus all the power of your thoughts here.

As you exhale, imagine that the air flowing out from the central nerve is like a blue stream, pouring out into the world through the nostrils.

Once you have managed to direct your consciousness perfectly to this point, the exercise continues as follows: whilst breathing in and out evenly, a tiny, barely half-finger-long,

very sharp tongue of flame emerges.
Now imagine that the little flame is like a spinning spindle.
Imagine that with every breath, the little flame rises higher. After eight breaths, it reaches the nerve centre around the navel.
Ten breaths fill every branch of the nerve centre at the navel with the fire of the soul.
After a further ten breaths, the fire begins to work its way downwards, warming the body right down to the soles of the feet.
Radiating from there, the fire acts upwards again after ten breaths and reaches the nerve centre of the heart.
Another ten breaths are required for the fire to reach the nerve centre of the neck.
Ten breaths are needed for the fire to reach the top of the skull. Continue your practice in this way.
The ancient texts say:
"Milk the Cow of Heaven gently".
With another ten breaths, the letter HAM now rises on the fire of the soul to the very top of the skull. Here it is transformed and dissolves into the current of the Moon, which is the current of the world's masculine creative forces. This current warms the nerve centres of the brain.
It takes ten breaths for this fire to reach the heart. It takes ten
breaths for this fire to reach the navel.
It takes ten breaths for this fire to reach the tips of the fingers and the soles of the feet.
To milk the Heavenly Cow, one must practise these one hundred and eight breaths.
During the learning period, this must be repeated six times over the course of a day and night.
Later, this number must be reduced to four, and the breathing must be regulated accordingly.
Apart from mealtimes and sleep, spend your days in uninterrupted meditation.
The phenomenon described above is the mastery of the body, the mind and the life force, and the development of the fire of the soul; as the ancients called it: 'the effective application of the fire of the soul'.

The experiences of the fire of the soul

The teaching on the experiences of the fire of the soul has two parts, namely

the teaching on ordinary and extraordinary experiences.
Regarding ordinary experiences, the ancient texts say:
"The accumulation of vital forces in the nerve centres gives rise to: first, the fire of the soul,
secondly: the feeling of salvation, thirdly: the primordial, divine state of consciousness.
When this occurs, consciousness no longer produces images. The world becomes like mist, a mirage, like a firefly.
Light bursts forth from hidden depths, like the dawn's first light.
Finally: the cloudless, clear sky".
Explanation of the above:
If a person consciously holds back the exhalation, the forces of the soul remain in their proper place, within the nerve centres. This process is called 'retention'.
Retention reduces the number of breaths. This is called 'reducing the breath'.
The shortening of the exhalation is called 'shortening the duration'.
If the force of exhalation is reduced, this is called 'retention of force'. If the nature of the breath is known, this is called 'retention of nature'.
The absorption of the power of the various elements is called 'the accumulation of powers'.
If one can thus master one's vital forces, the waves of the soul's fire become steady.
In this way, the mind and vital energy become completely calm, return to their natural state of peace, and develop the fire.
It then opens the nerve channels; the Moon-current rests within these nerves.
This current is the source of nerve pain.
This is where the pain of procreation arises.
Thereafter, the outlines of the six realms of the afterlife appear.
Together with the former, this is called the 'time of pain' or the 'time of heat'.
When the nerves, weary and paralysed by the hardships of material life, are strengthened once more by the power of the soul and the surging fervour of the core, then, among the soul's innumerable states, one attains happiness; this happiness is not yet inexhaustible and is thus not the highest. This is called 'the second step' or 'the time of happiness'.
When this inner happiness has completely attuned the consciousness to itself, man

already regards all things of the material world with indifference. This is “the experience of salvation”.
The mind ceaselessly produces images. These images intoxicate and poison the person. This now ceases. The mind returns to its original, natural state. It is pure, calm and clear. This state is samadhi. This is the ‘third step’, the ‘stage of indifference’.
However, this state of tranquillity does not yet liberate one from the sensory world. Phenomena still exert an influence, even if this influence is no more than that of mist, the light of a firefly, a mirage, the drowsy glow of a lamp, a dim twilight, or a cloudless sky. These still shine.
When the ascetic has reached the third stage of the transformation of the self, he should not ignore the images or signs that appear in this way. But neither should he seek that state in which one no longer perceives any phenomena, but lives in sheer, pure emptiness. Continue the practice of liberating the warmth of the soul, and this will of its own accord raise you to a higher level. Once the vital forces have been liberated within the ascetic, he becomes immune to illness; he will not feel the disadvantages of old age, nor any other influence that diminishes the vital force. He will attain the supernatural fivefold awareness. This, of course, is also merely an illusion, for it too will pass.

Extraordinary experiences

Regarding the extraordinary experiences associated with the liberation of the soul’s fire, the ancient texts say the following:
"The next stage is when the vital energies reach the junction of the three main nerves and penetrate there".
Furthermore: "The five signs and the eight virtues
appear." The explanation for this is:
If the life force enters the central nerve amidst ordinary experiences, this is called the life force entering the central nerve through effort.
This is why it is said that the entry of the life force into the central nerve occurs through the ascetic’s own effort. The external and internal life forces take on the form of a single cylinder.
From the region of the groin, the life force rises to the nerve centre of the navel and enters the central nerve, thus passing through all the nerve centres. In this way, it transforms into the fire of the soul and the fire of knowledge, completely permeates the nerves and the central channels, and resolves the centre.
There are five extraordinary signs that this dissolution has taken place:
These signs are: the Blaze, the Sky, the Sun and the Enlightenment.

The Blaze appears as a yellow radiance, the Moon as white, the Sun as red, the Sky as blue, and Enlightenment as a pink radiance. Each of these radiations spreads to the body as well, and a halo corresponding to the colour arises around the body.
When a person has attained the next eight stages of virtue, they receive tangible signs:
Through the element of earth, they attain perfect detachment.
Through the element of water, one attains lightness of body, youthful agility, and immunity to burns from fire.
Through the element of fire, one gains the ability to adapt to change, to dissolve all heavy substances, and not to sink in water.
Through the element of air, it gains the ability to float and the capacity for its body to be as light as a strand of wool.
Through the element of ether, it attains the ability to fly and to pass through all obstacles of earth and water.
If a person can step onto the path of the Moon, that is, if they can liberate all their spiritual power, they become transparent and shadowless.
If a person can step onto the path of the Sun, the heavy material nature of the body is purified; they can transform their own body into a radiant body of light composed of rays of various colours and become invisible to others.
When these hidden powers are realised, the nine orifices of the body and the four gates of speech close, yet two kinds of consciousness open. One attains great inner peace and happiness.
One now experiences samadhi, the ‘supernatural tranquillity of reconciliation’, unceasingly in this state of consciousness.

The supernatural soul-fire

Ancient texts teach the following about the supernatural soul-fire:
"The ancient spirit, created by no one and nothing, the eternal spirit, the boundless and infinite, this is the home of samadhi".
The explanation is as follows:
The life force of the five spiritual states is, in its true nature, masculine in character. It corresponds to the masculine aspect of the Buddha. This force and character reside in the left main nerve.
The life force of the five elements of nature is, in its true nature, of a feminine character. It corresponds to the feminine aspect of the Buddha. This power and character resides in the right-hand main nerve.
When the combined power of these two natures descends into the central nerve,

eternal knowledge from the Supreme Being is revealed. This is the being whom we can only conceive of as empty space, who is the primordial state of the soul, inexhaustible bliss, and brilliantly pure consciousness.
In the nerve centre of the navel dwells the prerequisite for actions corresponding to the consequences of karma: the foundation of karma. In the nerve centre of the heart dwells the ripening of the consequences flowing from karmic actions. In the nerve centre of the neck dwells the intensification of karmic tendencies. In the nerve centre of the brain dwells the possibility of liberation from the consequences of karma.
When the Moon-current rises through the nerve centres, it stimulates the forces of karma into action, and the upper part of the median nerve becomes intensely tense.
Thus, an invisible lifting of the cranial suture occurs.
If the small void created during this rising is filled with the life force drawn from the core, the person attains the Great Symbol and experiences the highest degree of initiation.
When a person achieves this, the stream of the core flows ever more abundantly in the lower part of the body and rises upwards; the fervour of the core permeates the entire human body. And the red stream, which originates in the head, flows downwards with ever greater force and richness.
The teaching on the basic exercises ends here. Practical application
The third part of the teaching on the fire of the soul, the practical application, has two chapters. The first deals with attaining the blessing of the fire, the second with attaining salvation.
The first part is divided into three points and deals with posture, breathing and the conscious discipline of thoughts.
This exercise serves to help one gain mastery of the fire through control of posture:
Sit in a squatting position with your legs crossed. Place your hands crossed beneath your knees and, if possible, reach the lower part of your thighs in this way. If your arms are shorter, adopt a similar position that does not feel forced. Turn your body three times from left to right and three times from right to left. Now shake yourself vigorously with a strong movement. Finally, shake yourself like a wild animal does when its fur stands on end. At the same time, jump up slightly and immediately sit back down on the meditation cushion.
Repeat this three times, then jump up once more to signal that you have reached the end of this sitting exercise.

In order for a person to attain the fire through mastery of the breath, the inhaled air must be pumped to the top of the lungs and the diaphragm must be drawn up until it reaches the point where the pot-shaped breath is usually held.
To attain the fire through the conscious discipline of thoughts, the following instruction applies:
Imagine that the Vajra-Yogini, the goddess of ascetics, is completely empty inside; only the three main nerves run through your body, and in the four main nerve centres, half the letter A glows.
In the palms of this image, imagine two sun discs; likewise, imagine two sun discs on either side of the image. Imagine that these four suns face one another.
Now imagine a sun disc at each of the meeting points of the main nerves.
When the rays of the sun discs on the palms and soles meet, a fire flares up. This fire ignites the sun below the navel. Once ignited, the fire sets half the letter A alight. With half the letter A ablaze, the fire spreads to the whole body.
Imagine that as you breathe out, the whole earth is filled with this fire. Whilst visualising these images, jump up twenty-one times.
This exercise must be practised for seven days. After seven days have passed, even the greatest cold can be endured in light linen clothing.

The question of salvation

The second part of the practical application is the attainment of salvation. This part has three stages: the preparatory exercise, the spiritual awakening of the companions of the mind; the fundamental exercise of ‘blazing and dripping’; and finally, the school of the body.
The spiritual contemplation of the companions of the mind is the preparatory exercise, and it is as follows: imagine a woman so beautiful and attractive that she captivates your gaze.
The fundamental practice of ‘blazing and dripping’ depends on mastery of six physical exercises, which were to be learnt during the development of the fire of the soul; but at the same time, it also depends on the connection between the breath and the mental images, which was likewise to be learnt during the development of the fire of the soul.
As on the previous occasion, now too, visualise yourself sharply and clearly as Sambhara-Chakra, who is none other than the male aspect of Vajra-Yogini. The divine form is empty within, like a tent. Its colour should be blue. In the centre of this emptiness, visualise the three main nerves and the four main nerve centres, the letter A

and the letter HAM, drawn sharply and clearly, as described above.
The life force ignites the half of the letter A. The resulting heat melts the letter HAM, and the letter falls in droplets onto the half of the letter A.
The flame runs down with a crackling sound and quickly reaches the solar plexus. If the letter HAM drips heavily, the burning drops intensify the flame until the fire reaches the heart, the neck and the nerve centres.
Finally, the letter HAM melts completely and trickles down to the centre of the neck. This experience is accompanied by ‘the joy of rapture’. This corresponds to bodily salvation. In an instant, a multitude of experiences now flash before you.
Remain in the balance of emptiness.
The droplets of the melted HAM letter fill the heart; amrita, the drink of the saved, is produced. Now the person experiences transcendental salvation. Accompanying sensation: the awareness of power. This power ripens karma, and the ascetic experiences the otherworldly tranquillity of the Great Pure Space.
When the process reaches the navel, the ascetic experiences ‘wonderful bliss’. The accompanying sensation of this experience is a pervasive and undulating feeling of bliss, as if one were swimming in lukewarm tongues of flame. The state of the Great Pure Space has been realised.
When this fire reaches the root of the reproductive organ, one experiences the state of the unborn, immortal, uncreated, infinite and boundless spirit. The ascetic can now comprehend and recognise every tiny fraction of a second in the world beyond the tangible world.
Anyone who can immerse themselves in the Pure Great Space can elevate their consciousness to a state that remains free from all contact with the visible sensory world.
Practise recognising these stages: how one follows from the other, how it begins with ordinary material sensations and how it ultimately becomes the experience of the Great Pure Space, how the fire of life permeates the person perfectly in the prescribed order: from the brain through the neck, the heart and the navel.
The physical school is the knowledge of the fundamental physical exercises. Here ends the teaching on the fire of the soul.

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF TAGPO LHADJE

For the benefit of all those who wish to step out of the eternal cycle of wandering, here follow the teachings of Master Tagpo Lhadje, the spiritual successor of the wise Kargyütpa lineage. Glory to the great gurus, whose names are spotless, pure as the snow in the mountains, whose virtue is inexhaustible as the ocean, and in whom infinite goodwill lived towards every tiny being in the universe—the living, the dead, and those not yet born.

It would be a pity

Whoever wishes to escape death and attain the clarity and alertness of the spirit must, above all, reflect on the following:

If the soul has reached the point of being born in human form, it would be a pity to squander this human life on meaningless, foolish and base deeds and to die like an animal.

During the brief span of this life, it would be a pity to serve ambition and selfishness and to succumb to the world's illusions.

If the wise master guides a person towards liberation, it would be a pity to part from him before he has enlightened the person's spirit.

The path to a person's liberation lies in the laws of human society and morality; and so it would be a pity if senseless passion were to tempt a person to break these laws.

The eternal light burns within everyone, and it would therefore be a pity to extinguish it in the glamour of the world.

It would be a pity to forget the precious teachings of the ancient sages and of times past, merely so that, in his meagre individual life, man might attain earthly advantages unworthy of the greatness of the spirit within him.

All people are brothers, and man has a duty towards his brother; for this very reason, it would be a pity to harbour indifference or ill will towards him.

Seek

Seek a master whose spirit is clear, whose knowledge is great, and whose heart is good. Seek a solitary and friendly place,
where is suitable and contemplation; settle there.

Seek out a friend whose habits and sensibilities are similar to your own and whose human qualities you can be proud of.

Avoid

Avoid a teacher whose heart is filled with ambition, who thirsts for fame and who is hungry for earthly treasures.

Avoid your friend, partner or student whose whose is detrimental to your peace of mind or your spiritual development.

Avoid houses and places where people are unfriendly and where you find no peace.

Avoid wealth acquired through fraud or theft. Avoid activities that harm your spirit and diminish it.

Avoid debauchery and frivolity, which diminish your worth in the eyes of your fellow human beings.

Avoid activities that serve no meaningful purpose.

Avoid words that conceal your own faults but emphasise those of others. You must know

One must know that all phenomena are illusions and thus pass away. The spirit has no independent existence and no Self, and so one must know that it can only be likened to empty space.

One must know that the mass of thoughts, which for man constitutes the spirit, is a series of causes and effects, each feeding off the other, but both are illusions and thus pass away.

One must know that the cause of suffering lies hidden in the deeds committed. No one but human beings themselves is responsible for these deeds. And suffering serves to awaken the human being.

It is quite possible

It is quite possible that even the greatest judge of human nature might confuse sensual passion with religious zeal.

It is quite possible that even the greatest judge of character might mistake the clinging to self-interest for love.

It is quite possible that even the greatest judge of character might confuse a sudden mental block and unconsciousness with the ecstasy of the infinite spirit.

It is quite possible that even the greatest judge of character might mistake sensual delusion for a revelation from a higher world.

It is quite possible that even the greatest judge of character might mistake the unscrupulous villain for the ascetic who transcends good and evil.

It is quite possible that even the most astute judge of character might mistake selfish behaviour for self-denial.

It is quite possible that even the greatest judge of character might confuse dishonesty with morality.
It is quite possible that even the greatest judge of character might mistake a swindler for a sage.

He is not mistaken

He is not mistaken who renounces his passions, leaves his hearth, to live without friends, wife or children.
He is not mistaken who honours his spiritual guide.
He is not mistaken who carefully examines the teachings, evaluates them, reflects upon them and forms his own opinion.
He is not mistaken who strives to attain spiritual heights and moral perfection, whilst leading a modest and secluded life.
He is not mistaken who thinks generously and stands by his resolve and duty.
He is not mistaken who nurtures a penetrating intellect and, as far as possible, curbs his pride. He is not mistaken who combines intellectual knowledge, the perseverance to become a master, deep contemplation, and, alongside these, freedom from vanity.
He is not mistaken who lives in self-denial, sacrifices himself for others, seeks not his own good, and lives for the benefit of his fellow men.

Indispensable

Indispensable the permeable spirit and understanding, that the man finds the truths and is able to apply them to good effect.
It is essential, if one has chosen a spiritual life, to recognise the cycle of eternal wandering in the world of illusion and to have the desire to break free from it.
In the spiritual life, it is essential to understand the depths, to possess fearless courage and tireless perseverance.
It is essential to have the will to make amends for one's sins and to live a virtuous life.
It is essential that one does not acquire perfect knowledge of one's own consciousness and the world beneath the conscious mind.
It is essential that one does not acquire the ability to focus one's spirit at every moment.
It is essential that one does not see the opportunity for spiritual perfection in every action and thought.

It is good for

It is good for those who can break the threads of superstition and and who

seeks a noble-minded, wise master.
Good is he who can resist the lure of wealth.
Blessed is he who can renounce social life to live in solitude, far from people.
Blessed is the person who, free from ambition, can renounce the pleasures of food and drink.
Blessed is he who resolves never to serve either the selfish aims of others or his own, and who can stand firm in his resolve.
Blessed is he who recognises that the sensory world is an illusion, who can detach himself from this illusion and devote himself entirely to the spirit.

He wanders aimlessly

He wanders aimlessly who follows a hypocritical pretender, instead of joining a wise master and living according to the teaching.
He wanders aimlessly who makes grand plans for a long life, instead of fulfilling the duty of each day as if every day he lives were his last.
He wanders aimlessly who preaches to large audiences, instead of withdrawing into solitude to reflect on the meaning of the teaching.
He wanders aimlessly who vacillates between fear and hope, instead of seeking the truth.
He wanders aimlessly who seeks to reform others instead of perfecting himself.
He wanders aimlessly who seeks public recognition, instead of developing his own hidden abilities in solitude.
He wanders aimlessly who spends his life in idleness instead of seeking enlightenment.

There is no need

Once a person has recognised the true nature of the spirit, there is no longer any need to listen to the chatter about religion and morality.
Once one has understood the meaning of the world, there is no longer any need for penance or repentance.
Once one walks the path of peace, there is no longer any need to strive for the forgiveness of sins.
Once one has attained the unshakeable purity and tranquillity of the spirit, there is no longer any need to ponder the means leading to perfection.
Once one has been freed from one’s passions, there is no longer any need to fight against them.

Once one has realised that this world is an illusion, there is no longer any need to reject it, nor to seek any further knowledge beyond it.

THE CHÖD

Instructions regarding the tools to be used

To curb the arrogance of the elemental beings through your practice, take the skin of a wild beast with large claws; a tent as a symbol of breaking through; the three-pronged trident as a sign of the high goal; a horn made from a human shinbone to keep witches and demons at bay; a drum to defeat the ghosts; a bell and a small bell to drive away the spirits; a narrow, long flag, finally, made of tiger skin, adorned with human hair.

Instructions regarding the location

Fear not the wrath of witches and demons; guard yourself against the onslaught of the eight earthly passions; let the wish take hold that you may attain the four forms of boundless mastery and banish all delusion from your mind. This degree of perfection stands under the protection of the Most High. Were it not so, you would be at the mercy of the secret forces. The witches and demons, the evil spectres swarming from the unseen world who dwell here, shall become as gentle as lambs, and you may drive them before you like a flock; thus shall you rule over the helpless in the chosen place. Seize them with superhuman strength, twist them by their feet three times above your head, and imagine that you are hurling them to the ground. And keeping this image alive within you, raise the tent and cast down the animal skin. Thus even the mightiest spirits will bow down before you, the demons will be tamed and lie unconscious at your feet.

Immersion in the Mandala Contemplation

Once you have drawn the sacred circle in preparation for the ritual sacrifice, conjure up within yourself the image of the sacred Mount Meru, which rises in the very centre of the human body. The four cardinal points are none other than the four great realms of your body; your feet form the foundation of the world; your head reaches the realm of the gods; your two eyes are like the sun and the moon; your heart, lungs, liver, kidneys and spleen contain all the riches of the world, on earth and in heaven, amongst gods and men.

Meditation

If you hold this image within yourself with deep reverence and fix it firmly in your mind, remain in this state, with a calm spirit, and keep yourself in balance, just as existence itself is in balance.

The Mixed Feast

Once you have offered the mixed feast, see yourself as follows: you are the spiritual being emerging from the corpse. Your wish has been granted. It was she whom the plants of the gardens and food sustained, whom clothing covered, whom medicine healed, but now you have transformed this material being into a spirit.

If you have offered the sacrifice of the red feast, see yourself as follows: you are the goddess of wrath. Flay your body, strip away the love of your earthly self, stretch the skin so wide that it envelops the entire existing world. Place the flesh, the bone, the blood upon it. Thus this skin will be like the executioner at the scaffold.

Once you have offered the sacrifice of the black feast, see yourself as follows: see your own sickness, wickedness, sin and suffering, and that of all other beings, gathered together in a single heap; this is the work of demons, they have been doing this since time immemorial, doing nothing but gnawing at the fate of mankind. Imagine this immeasurable misery in the form of a vast, black cloud; draw this cloud into yourself, swallow it whole, together with the black bodies of the witches and demons.

The time of sacrifice

If you are preparing for the white sacrifice and wish to obtain the drink of eternal life, with redoubled zeal and straining every fibre of your strength, choose the hour when the dawn's first light is just swallowing up the night.

If you wish to atone for the sins of your past destiny, the afternoon is the appropriate time, and it is then that the mixed feast sacrifice must be held.

If, through rigorous practice, you wish to strengthen your devotion and destroy the passions of your Self, night is the best time for the red feast.

Hold the black feast at evening twilight; then it will free you from the shackles of evil fate, and it will be of benefit to all who await deliverance.

The dance that dispels illusions

Take note that in this great moment, you are the goddess of all-knowing wisdom who fills the world. You are so strong that you encompass the world, so beautiful as perfection. Blow the horn made of human bone and perform the dance that dispels illusion, with reverence!

Phat!

I I was, in courage I practised myself always, I strained my will to attain great knowledge, so that I might

. Now I dance amidst the dazzling images of spiritual beings and amidst the sensual images of the material Self.
Give me the strength to dispel this double illusion!
Help me, masters of ancient times; help me, heroic men and women of ancient times; you are as numerous as the drops of the sea, you great saints for whom this world was too small and who were at home among the gods; help me and bless my dance, that I may achieve the goal of my endeavour!
Phat!

The Dance of the Five Directions

When I beat the rhythm with my drum towards the east, I summon the world beyond the human realm, the great holy men and women who sit around the moon and listen to the flute of mirror-bright wisdom. With their feet they trample the heads of the mighty demons, the heads of Hatred and Wrath.
Hum. Hum. Hum.
Phat!
When I take the steps of my dance towards the south, the great holy men and women sit in a triangle, trampling with their feet the head of the mighty demon, the head of Pride, and the drum of Omniscient Wisdom rolls.
Hum. Hum. Hum.
Phat!

When my dance turns towards the western horizon, where thousands of fat animals graze in the pastures, the great holy men and women sit in a circle. With their feet they trample the head of the mighty demon, the head of Sensual Pleasure, and listen to the sweet toll of the all-seeing Knowledge.
Hum. Hum. Hum.
Phat!

When the dance turns towards the dark north, the great holy men and women sit in a square formation. Their feet trample the head of the mighty demon, the head of Envy, and the crown of Wisdom, which sees into infinity, shines upon them.
Hum. Hum. Hum.
Phat!

When the dance flows at its centre, at the point of perfection, the great holy men and women bless the dance floor. Their feet trample the head of the mighty demon, the head of the bloodsucking Gluttony, whilst the voice of the all-knowing Being, the melodious Hum, rings in their ears.
Hum. Hum. Hum.

Now decide that you are ready to drive
the spear into the root of your self-love,
Phat!
From the east, a goddess approaches, a spear in her hand, and this spear is the sign of love. From the south, a goddess approaches, a spear in her hand, and this spear is the sign of compassion. From the west, the Lotus Goddess approaches, a spear in her hand, and this spear is the sign of devotion. From the north, the goddess of fate approaches, spear in hand, and this spear is the symbol of unyielding truth. From the centre, the Goddess of Buddha approaches, spear in hand, and this spear is the sign of salvation. The goddesses trample on self-love and, with steady hands, thrust their spears into the root of self-love, so that the weapon quivers and comes to rest within it.
Phat!
Once you have recognised the roots of your selfishness—hatred, anger, pride, sensual pleasure, envy, and intoxication—recognise the next step as well. This step is: know that your body is a sacrifice.

Contemplation of the images of the gods and
gurus Phat!
The pure light of the Supreme Buddha, who is beyond action, will, and intention, beyond the wanderings of the world of illusion—I see you in a rainbow-coloured halo, I see you with your living face, I see the great masters, the long line of masters of truth, who are the signs of the great light. I see the guardians of truth, the gods, who surround you in countless multitudes. O Supreme Buddha, in your pure light, I now offer my sacrifice.

The yogi's prayer:
Phat!
Oh, he in whom light has not yet dawned does not know what redeems him!
They do not know that they carry within themselves the light, the radiance that no one created, that is eternal!
Oh, if only the time would come soon when, plunged into the endless sea of suffering, they might recognise the spirit of the Ancient Light!

Say this prayer three times and engrave it upon yourself with all your
strength. Then comes the resolution:
Phat!
False is the knowledge that takes what is visible for reality!
True Great Knowledge! Annul the result of my devout practice!

Let there be no other resolve within me, only that I may seek to know the truth without fear or hope!

Now that it is time for the sacrifice, imagine vividly that your body is crammed full of the coveted things of the material world.

The sacrifice of the material body

I held you dear, material body, but you are an illusion; now be a sacrifice. Be a sacrifice without reservation, unconditionally; be utterly destroyed to your very roots; may the gods who sit around me here bear witness.

Prayer to the Guru Phat!

In the spiritual realm of the Supreme Being, amidst the radiance of rainbow colours and rays of light, Father, you know what was yesterday, you know today and tomorrow, you who were born of the lotus flower. Through penance, you have eradicated all magic from yourself; you are surrounded by the greatest goddesses of the heavens, goddesses resplendent in their beauty, who recite the sacred teachings in their enchanting voices and rest in the pure light of divine knowledge.

Your son now turns to you, with faith and supplication. The images and thoughts that are the illusions of the outer world, whatever they may call themselves—good or evil, god or demon—have now been destroyed. The images and thoughts that are the illusions of the inner world, whatever they may call themselves—fear or hope—have now been destroyed. On my path, these images were only obstacles. Now they have all vanished, for here they have been absorbed into the reverent contemplation of reality.

The great and holy teaching has dispelled the illusion. Thank you for this, Father, Lord. Bless me. Help me to reach the spiritual realm of the Supreme Being.

Phat! Phat! Phat!

Take good care. Remain in the state of union with the truth. Phat!

Imagine that your body is filled to the brim with the memories of your countless past lives and the inclinations and passions of your countless future lives. Now imagine that this body is a repulsive, greasy corpse, as vast as the earth itself.

Say: Phat!

Now imagine that your true Self, the divine Self, stands outside this body as the Goddess of Wrath. The goddess holds an axe in her hand. And now watch

as she cuts your head off the torso. Look at your own severed head, like a giant cup. The goddess places it on a foot made of three skulls. Each of the three feet represents a world: the world of matter, the world of the soul, and the world of the spirit.
Now the goddess tears your ugly corpse to pieces and throws your skull before the feet of the gods as a sacrifice.
Now the holy one utters the three secret syllables: Aum, Ah, Hum, Ha, Ho, Hri. Thus the sacrifice is transformed and becomes the drink of life, a marvellous, shining drink.

Repeat this mantra several times and think strongly that the impurities of the mystically dissolved body must be washed away, the entire sacrifice must be transformed into the drink of life, and this must be offered so that all beings may partake of it. Now comes the invitation to the sacrificial feast
Phat!
Venerable gods, great Holy Trinity, defenders of the faith, all hosts of elemental beings, evil spirits, pitiful multitude, behold my sacrifice and draw near to the devout penitent, to me; see that I have cast my material body as a sacrifice without fear. At this very moment, I sever the path of my wandering in the world of illusion.
My skull has expanded as vast as the earth itself. It is filled with the drink of life, the drink of wisdom, the drink of happiness. You all rejoice in this magic and rejoice that I have made my sacrifice without hesitation or complaint.
Now then, my guests, prepare for the majestic feast; the drum made from a human skull, the finest and rarest of all drums, now invites you with its sharp, ringing sound. The banquet table is covered in human skin—how beautiful! Can't you see? The horn is made from a human shinbone; it has a wonderful sound, doesn't it? The bell and the many little chimes are already ringing—truly magnificent! Come along, you vultures, come forward, every one of you!
Phat!

Now comes the sacrificial feast and the consecration of the sacrifice.
Phat!
I offer my sacrifice to the Supreme Lord, my great Master, to the ancient gurus, gods, goddesses and guardian deities—they who preserve the faith. To them I now offer my body, transformed into a spiritual being. I have purified myself of all darkness, all illusory dream-images, all demonic forces. I have now completed my work of penance. I have realised that the material world is an illusion. And now I wish to

immerse myself in the ancient Radiant Light, free from fear and inhibition, and I wish to find my freedom in the spirit of the Supreme Being. Allow me, Masters, Gods, to become like you. Bless me!
Phat!

The offering must be presented to the spiritual beings

There are eight degrees of the world of illusion, and there are also eight degrees of existence beyond illusion. Elemental beings, you who live in human form, evil, gloating, devouring spectres, you who deceive and mislead the well-meaning man: human skin now covers all the spaces and is filled with the flesh, bones and blood of the sacrifice. The sacrificial feast is ready. I would be a coward, weak and foolish, if I still dared to think that there is an 'I' and something that is 'mine'. There is no more! And you would be ungrateful if you did not rejoice in the sacrifice. Hurry, feast, swallow your morsels, cook all the pieces and leave not a single crumb of it.
Phat!

The act of sacrifice

For ages beyond imagination, the result of deeds committed in past lives has been the result of excessive meat-eating. Now, however, I turn away from my guests, who are weaker than I. I feel sympathy for them, for I see that they have not yet received their share, though they long for every little morsel! For them, it is an unimaginable delight! May this sacred sign calm them.
And to every being I have ever met, here or anywhere else, I wish that they may attain the enlightenment of the Buddha and atone for every transgression of their fate.
Phat!

Renouncing the benefits of sacrifice

Phat!
May neither the shadow of hope nor fear touch me again; may it lose all meaning to me whether someone is religious or irreligious. For according to the eternal law, one is the cause of the other, and brings forth a new fate, and an endless chain of fates. No reward is needed either! In the realm of truth, there is no merit!
Phat!
By sacrificing my physical body now, with the filth accumulated over countless millennia, I have reached the pure light of eternal truth. By allowing you, primordial beings and gods, to feast upon me on this feast day, I shall never again

be born in human form. The wandering in illusion is over!
May the spirit, then, rise up within me in a straight line—the spirit that was never born and will never die, that was created by no one, that has been and will be from eternity—may it rise above nature, above man, above the primordial beings, above the gods.
I wish that the spirit may have compassion for living beings, may be their aid, so that they may be freed from the selfish delusion of the self.
From this moment, here on earth, I dedicate my life to humanity, and I bear the joys and sufferings of life with equanimity. I have seen through the world of illusion. Now I reign over all the realms of man. Thanks be to every being who has ever been at my service.
May victory accompany the superhuman purpose that has awakened within me, that I may enter the realm of the Supreme Being.
Phat!

Here ends the ritual of the execution of the earthly Self

Make use of this opportune time now that you are human. Nothing protects against death and the vicissitudes of fate.
Life in all its forms is suffering, for good follows evil, and evil follows good, eternally, unceasingly.
The wheel of life turns. There is no mercy. My Master, my Lord, grant me the opportunity to be free.
May this book and this teaching be for the benefit of those who wish to be free!

THE DREAM

The teaching on the dream has four parts: understanding the dream, the transformation of the dream, recognising the dream as a characteristic state of illusion, and finally, conscious immersion into the state of the dream.

The aim of the first exercise, which teaches the resolve needed to understand the dream, is for a person to realise the unbroken continuity of consciousness; in other words, to merge dream-consciousness with waking consciousness.

During the day, whilst awake, one must therefore constantly bear in mind that life is a dream, that the world is made of the stuff of dreams, and that this dream is the true nature of the material world.

Before falling asleep, one must ask the guide to shed light on the state of dreaming, and one's understanding must be firmly established. This approach will undoubtedly lead to an understanding of the dream.

The ancient masters said that the world is a chain of causes and effects, and the first cause is always the decision.

In the second exercise, which teaches breathing to understand the dream, proceed as follows:

You must sleep on your right side, like a lion. Gently place the thumb and ring finger of your right hand on the carotid artery in your neck. Use the fingers of your left hand to close your nostrils. Let the saliva gather in your mouth.

The third exercise, which teaches the contemplation necessary for understanding dreams, has three parts: the contemplation itself; extracting the feeling of happiness from the contemplation; and preventing the content of the dream from dissipating into the waking state.

In the visualisation itself, the following procedure must be followed:

The ascetic must visualise, with strong will, the Vajra-Yogini, the protective goddess of ascetics. He must visualise the magical syllable AH, in red, at the centre of his throat. This syllable is nothing other than the symbol of divine speech.

All effort must be directed towards the light of the syllable AH, and then the ascetic will come to know the affairs of the world, understand the visible and the invisible, and awaken to the realisation that the world is an illusion. Thus, he will also understand the dream. If he wishes to extract the feeling of happiness from this vision, he must follow the following procedure:

During the evening, one must thoroughly practise the state of dreaming using the method just described

. In the morning, the breathing technique known as ‘pot-shaped breathing’ must be repeated seven times in succession. Eleven times, one must resolutely determine that the ascetic understands the state of dreaming. Thereafter, one must concentrate with all one’s strength on the white point situated between one’s eyebrows.

If the ascetic has a sanguine temperament, they should visualise the point as red; if the ascetic’s nervous system is not strong, they should visualise the point as green.

If the ascetic still does not understand the state of dreaming, they should try the following:

In the evening, immerse yourself in the contemplation of the point. In the morning, practise pot-shaped breathing twenty-one times in succession, and twenty-one times in succession resolve to understand the state of dreaming. Focus your attention on the black dot, the size of a pea, situated at the very tip of the genital organ, and you will understand the state of dreaming.

There are four methods to prevent the content of the dream from dissipating whilst awake.

The first dissipation usually occurs at the moment of waking; the second occurs because the ascetic lacks sufficient practice; the third occurs as a result of physical or mental fatigue or listlessness; the fourth is the so-called dissipation of negation.

At the very moment when one might comprehend the dream, it dissipates in wakefulness, because one thinks one must understand the dream, yet wakes up in the process.

The best remedy for this is good nutrition and vigorous physical labour. This makes the dream deeper and strengthens the person’s spirit.

Dissolution due to fatigue occurs when the same dream returns repeatedly without any change in its content.

The remedy for this is to make the dream the focus of one’s contemplation more frequently, with the determination to understand the essence of the dream. In such cases, one should practise pot-shaped breathing and concentrate intensely on the point between the eyebrows.

The reason why dreams become fragmented due to physical or mental fatigue is that the person has dreamt a great deal, but upon waking remembers very little of them.

The remedy for this is to avoid impurity and defilement; turn to a master and have him initiate you into samadhi through meditation,

state of perfect liberation; visualise the point at the root of the reproductive organ. In this way, you can prevent the dissipation.
If the dream dissipates through negation, the reason is that the person harbours aversion towards the state of dreaming.
The remedy for this is as follows: practise pot-shaped breathing, visualise the point at the root of the genitals, and in your meditation offer a spiritual sacrifice to the goddesses and the heroes of humanity.
The second part of the teaching on dreams is the transformation of the dream. This is done as follows:
If you dream of fire, think this: What does this fear of fire mean? Seize this thought and step onto the fire. Deal with other dreams in the same way; trample down everything you dream of.
After this, direct your thoughts towards the realms of the Buddha and see the gates leading to those realms open before you.
At the moment of falling asleep, imagine a red dot at the centre of your neck and think that, with the help of this dot, you will see the longed-for realms in their full reality.
If your mind is in the right state and you have succeeded in concentrating your powers, you will see the desired realm, be it the Tushita Heaven where the bodhisattvas dwell, the Heaven of Bliss, or the so-called Diamond Heaven, the abode of the saved.
This practice leads to the transformation of the dream.
The third part of the teaching on dreams is the recognition of the dream as a characteristic state of illusion. The ancient texts say the following on this:
"If you set out on the path that leads to the recognition of the dream as a characteristic state of illusion, banish all fear from yourself.
If the dream conjures fire before you, turn it into water, the opposite element.
If you dream of a small thing, turn it into a great one.
If you dream of a great thing, transform it into a small one.
In this way, you will come to know the nature of measure.
If you dream of one thing, transform it into many.
If you dream of many things, transform them into one.
"In this way, you will come to know both unity and multiplicity.
Practise this steadfastly until you have learnt it thoroughly."
If the ascetic regards the bodies and objects appearing in his dream as the magic of the gods, he will understand that everything he dreams is an illusion.

The fourth part of the teaching on dreams is conscious immersion in the dream state: ‘Contemplation of the true nature of existence’. When the ascetic has reached this stage, the motivation behind his dreams becomes clear, he is purified, and he understands that all dream phenomena in man are evoked by the gods.

Now, if the ascetic directs his consciousness towards the divine forms seen in the dream and preserves the forms in their original state, without thinking anything of them, or taking anything away from them, or adding anything to them, then these divine dream forms enter into a hidden harmony with that part of consciousness which neither thinks nor acts. When this happens, the Pure Light begins to dawn within the person. The source of the Pure Light is the great Void.

When the ascetic has perfectly attained this state, he will see in his dreams just as he does whilst awake, and he will realise that one state is just as illusory as the other. Every phenomenon is a modification of the Great Pure Light. The ascetic realises that perceptible reality is merely empty magic, an illusion of pure Spiritual Consciousness.

The teaching on dreams ends here.

Tsong-Khapa, the great guru, writes the following about dreams in his book Lamrim:

It is important that one should not waste time on dreams and should not allow one’s mind to be flooded by a mass of disjointed, partly frightening and disordered images, for this represents a great loss of energy for the individual. The state of dreaming can also be utilised to be just as productive as life lived in the waking state.

One must bear in mind that an action actually carried out has consequences that are more or less pleasant or unpleasant, but always visible. The action actually carried out, however, is not important; what is important is the mental resolve preceding the action. It is this decision that makes a person better or worse, for it is this decision that affects the human soul. The decision awakens or lulls into slumber relationships, connections, intentions, and hidden abilities, and it is these that then lead towards light or darkness. Only he is the master of his life who seizes upon his actions at the moment of decision.

A person’s true nature cannot fully manifest itself in the waking state, for in the waking state, one’s consciousness is dominated by one’s social position, education, past, the nature of one’s environment, and countless memories. The true nature of the human being lives a hidden life in the impulses lying beneath the threshold of consciousness. In the state of sleep, the obstacles of wakefulness melt away, and

human being is liberated and reveals itself in a truer form of its nature. This is why it is important to understand the state of dreaming and to use dreams for enlightenment.

In a dream, the true self acts, the true self thinks, the true self sees. In a dream, intention, impulse and passion reveal themselves in their true form. Anyone who knows that the decision is more important than the execution of the act will recognise that: in the person who has decided to commit murder but has not carried it out, the mental state of murder has already taken hold. The truth of this realisation can be experienced in the dream. For although external circumstances may have prevented the murder, the murderous impulse will continue to live within the person. And the consequences of this impulse manifest themselves in the person's true nature.

That is why it is important for a person to connect the two states of consciousness—dream and wakefulness—and to bridge the gap between them. Once the consciousness of dreaming and waking has been connected and enlightened, human consciousness reaches a state that becomes inescapable and perfect in both waking and dreaming: mindfulness.

The practice leading to the attainment of wakefulness is as follows:

When it is time to sleep, go outdoors, wash your feet, lie down and assume the sleeping lion's posture, on your right side with your legs stretched out so that your left leg rests on your right leg.

Visualise the light, free from all material attachments. Remain in this state. Fill yourself with this light and fall asleep in this state. Whoever has filled their consciousness with light at the moment of falling asleep will not become darkened during sleep.

Recall the Buddha's teachings.

Meditate upon them, and at the very moment you drift off, reject of your own accord any temptation towards impure deeds. Under such circumstances, the time spent sleeping will be no different from the time spent awake. Your spirit will follow the same path during sleep as it does by day. The state of wakefulness must be carefully maintained. Even if the body is overcome by sleep, the mind must remain clear. Let your sleep be as light as that of wild animals. S then in that momentyou you wake up, the moment

THE BARDO

The Bardo of the Moment of Death

(Instructions for recognising the presence of death, or the first stage of the Chikkai Bardo: the Radiant Light at the moment of death.)

At the moment of death, during the transitional period, when sitting face to face with the Shining Light, the first:

One who has heard many religious teachings, though not understood them, and one who has understood them but has not mastered them perfectly, may be present. But everyone who has received the practical teaching—namely, the leaders, if it has been applied to them—may be present at the face-to-face sitting with the Shining Primordial Light; and then the dying person, without any transitional state, arrives in the Spiritual Body of the Supreme Being.

Here follows the method of application:

It is best to find the guru from whom the departed received their guiding instructions; if that guru cannot be found, then one of their fellow believers; and if none of these can be found, a learned person of the same faith; if none of these can be found, a person who can read correctly and intelligently and who will read this text several times. In this way, the departed will recall what they heard during the face-to-face sitting, recognise the Primordial Light, and undoubtedly attain liberation.

As for the timing of the application:

When the exhalation ceases, the life-force falls back into the centre of Wisdom, and the initiate experiences the Shining Primordial Light in its entirety. When the life-force falls back and descends through the right and left channels, the Transitional Period briefly dawns.

The above must be applied before the life force dissipates in the left nerve.

This lasts as long as there is still inhalation, that is, roughly the time it takes to eat a meal.

The procedure is as follows:

When breathing is almost ceased, it is best to apply the transition effectively. If the application is ineffective, one must address the departed with these words:

Sir, the time has come for you to seek the path to the realm of truth. Your breath will cease shortly. You are seated face to face with the Radiant Light. And you are now beginning to experience the Bardo

, in full reality, that all things are like the empty and cloudless sky and the bare, spotless mind, like transparent space, without circumference or centre. At this very moment, recognise yourself and remain in this state. At this time, I shall seat you face to face with me.

Once this has been read into the dying person's ear, it must be repeated several times, and indeed until the breath ceases, so that it may be thoroughly engraved upon the dying person's spirit.

When breathing has almost ceased, the dying person must be laid on their right side, in the position known as 'the sleeping lion'. The arteries on the right and left sides of the neck must be pressed.

If the dying person shows signs of drowsiness or if the state of falling asleep is already advanced, this must be interrupted; the carotid arteries must be pressed gently but firmly. In this way, the life force cannot return from the nerves and will certainly exit through the Brahmanic orifice. The true face-to-face sitting must now be practised.

At this moment, every living being first beholds the Bardho of the Radiant Light of Reality, which is none other than the Spiritual Body of the Supreme Being.

The pause between the cessation of exhalation and the cessation of inhalation is the time during which the life force resides in the central nerve.

The average person calls this state 'loss of consciousness'. The duration of this state is uncertain. It depends on good or poor health, and on the condition of the nerves and the life force. For those who have little experience of the stable and calm state of meditation, or for those with strong nerves, this state lasts a long time.

When sitting face to face, the repetition of the incantation addressed to the departed must be continued until yellow mucus begins to ooze from the bodily orifices of the departed.

For those who have been wicked in their lives and who have weak nerves, this state lasts only as long as it takes to snap one's fingers. For others, however, it lasts as long as it takes to eat a meal.

Various great teachings state that this state of unconsciousness lasts for three and a half days. Several other religious treatises claim it lasts for four days. One must sit face to face with the Shining Light throughout the entire period.

The method of application is as follows:
If, at the time of death, a person is able to recognise the signs of death for themselves, they have already understood this knowledge beforehand. If the dying person is unable to do this themselves, then either the guru, or a fellow believer, or a sibling close to the dying person, should be at hand and vividly alert the dying person to the signs of death as they appear in due order, and repeatedly say this:
Here is the sign when the earth sinks into the water!
When all the signs of death have manifested, give the dying person this advice, whispering softly into their ear:
Sir, do not let yourself be misled!
If it is your brother or some other person, call them by name and say this:
Sir, since that which is called death has now come upon you, make up your mind and say: 'Behold, the hour of death is here. If I make good use of this passing and wish it to be for the benefit and welfare of all living beings, of everyone who dwells in the boundless expanse of the heavens, I shall attain the Perfection of Mindfulness and thus direct my gaze towards love and compassion for Perfection."
If you shape your thoughts in this way, especially at the time when all living beings may enter the Spiritual Body of the Supreme Being, know that you are in this state; resolve to attain the state of the Great Symbol in which you are, as follows:
"Even if I cannot realise this Bardo, I wish to know it; and insofar as I too am a constituent part of the Great One Being in this state, in whatever form—it matters not at all what form—I shall be for its benefit: I wish to serve every living being, every living being, however many there may be beneath the heavens."
Holding fast to this resolve, now try to recall some religious practice, one that you are accustomed to practising in your life.
When the reader utters these words, he should bring his lips close to the dying person's ear and, in a clear and intelligible manner, impress them upon the dying person's mind, preventing his spirit from wandering even for a moment.
Once the exhalation has ceased, press firmly on the dream nerve; if the person is a lama or a person of higher rank and greater learning than the reader himself, these words must be imprinted:

Venerable Sir, now that you are experiencing the Radiant Light, try to remain in this state that you are experiencing.
In the event that the dying person is someone else, the reader should sit face to face with them:
Sir, listen to me. You are now experiencing the radiance of the Radiant Light of pure reality. Recognise it. Sir, the true nature of your present mind is empty and has not been fashioned into any tangible form or colour; it is empty by nature, True Reality, the Eternal Good.
Your own mind, which is now emptiness—do not regard it as the emptiness of nothingness, but as Mind itself, without any hindrance, radiant, blazing, delightful. Aware, the awareness of the Eternal Good.
Your own Mind, which has been shaped into nothing and is empty in reality, the radiant and delightful—these two are inseparable. The union of these two is the Spiritual Body of the Supreme Being, the state of Perfect Enlightenment.
Your own Mind is radiant, empty, inseparable from the Great Radiant One; it cannot be born nor can it die; it is the Unchanging Light.
This is enough to know. To recognise the emptiness of your own mind as the Awakened Being, and to regard this as your own mind, is tantamount to attaining the state of the divine spirit.
Repeat this clearly and distinctly three or seven times. This will bring to the dying person's mind the face-to-face sitting taught by their former guru. Secondly: it brings to mind that the dying person should recognise the pure mind in the Radiant Light; thirdly: if they come to know the true reality of their own being, they will be completely united with the spiritual body of the Supreme Being, and their liberation is assured.

The second stage

(Instruction regarding the second step: the secondary Radiant Light seen immediately after death.)
The departed thus recognises the Radiant Primordial Light and attains liberation. However, if there is a fear that the Radiant Light will not be recognised, it can be taken for certain that what is known as the secondary Radiant Light will dawn; this begins to appear after the cessation of breathing, namely some time after the duration of a meal.
Whether the life force passes through the right or left nostril and exits through which orifice of the body depends on a person's good or bad karma. This is followed by the enlightenment of the spirit. Whether the state of the Radiant Primordial Light lasts for the duration of a meal depends on the good or bad constitution of the nerves and

whether the person has previously practised sitting face to face.
When the essence of consciousness leaves the body, the departed speaks thus to itself: Have I died or have I not died? It cannot decide. It sees its relatives and kin just as it was accustomed to seeing them before. It even hears their complaints. The visions of terrible karma have not yet come to an end. Nor have the dreadful phenomena and experiences evoked by the god of Death yet arrived.
It is during this interval that the lama or reader must apply the instructions:
There are believers at the perfected stage and there are those at the contemplative stage. If the person is one who has reached the perfected stage, call them by name three times and repeat the above teachings regarding sitting face-to-face with the Radiant Primordial Light. If the person is at the contemplative stage, read to them the introductory descriptions and the text on the meditation on the guardian deities, and then say this:
Lord, meditate on your own guardian deity. At this point, the reader must mention the name of the deity. Do not lose focus. Direct your thoughts earnestly towards your guardian deity. Meditate on them as if they were the image of the moon on water, visible but not real in themselves. Meditate on them as if they were a being with a physical body.
The reader should speak thus and engrave this firmly in the mind of
the departed. If the departed was an ordinary person, say:
Meditate on the Compassionate God.
If the departed is thus seated face to face, even they will surely recognise the Bardo, something one would not expect a person to recognise without assistance.
Those whom the guru sat face to face with during their lifetime, yet who did not master the knowledge, are unable to recognise the Bardo on their own. Such a person must be effectively warned by the guru or a fellow believer.
There are also those who, although they have mastered the teaching, are mentally unable to resist the visions due to the severity of the illness causing death. This instruction is indispensable for such people as well.
It is best if the first stage of the Bardo is grasped immediately. If not, however, by applying this second stage, the former will be recalled in the departed, and on the second step of the Bardo their understanding will be illuminated, and they will then attain liberation.
In the second stage of the Bardo, the body is made of the substance known as the ‘luminous

vision.
The departed do not know whether they are dead or alive, and great light floods over them. If the instructions are successfully applied to the departed in this state, then karma can no longer rule over them. Just as the sun's rays dispel the gloom, so too does the Radiant Light dispel the power of karma on this path.
What is called the second stage of the Bardo looms over the spirit-body. Those who know this hover around places that played a significant role in their lives. If this teaching is applied now, their intention is fulfilled; visions of karma have not yet overwhelmed them, and the departed cannot be misled or turned away from enlightenment.

The Fall Back

If the departed cannot find the path even in the Chönyid Bardo, they suddenly hear the four roars of the sounds of horror. One sound is as if a mighty mountain were crashing down; the second is as if the sea had turned into a waterfall; the third is as if a forest had burst into flames; the fourth is like a hundred thousand claps of thunder.
A terrible fear seizes the Departed One, and he tries to flee. The place where he wishes to hide is the Womb of the Mother.
Three chasms block the way before the displaced one: the white, the black and the red chasm. If the displaced one falls into any of these chasms, it means they have fallen into the lap of an earthly woman.
The departed is also pursued by other visions: blinding spheres of light and rays of sparks. A terrible downpour chases him. On all sides, angry female and male figures appear.
The departed's Bardo body—a sensitive spirit body endowed with senses—exists at that stage of being which is suitable for rebirth.
Its movement is completely free, though for the time being it cannot enter the womb.
The spirit body is capable of traversing the space of the universe with the speed of thought.
In the Bardo, only those beings whose consciousness is similarly light or dark can see one another.
Those wandering in the Bardo feed on the scent of things of a material nature.
The light of the sun and moon is invisible in the Bardo, and so there is neither light nor darkness there. Twilight reigns in the Bardo.
The departed consciousness is completely paralysed for a certain time and remains in a state of unconsciousness

. This period lasts for three and a half days.
When it regains consciousness, it realises that it has died and is overcome by deep sorrow.
At this time, the Bardo can be fully realised.
Soon the consciousness takes on a new form and adapts completely to the Bardo.
At this point, the Bardo is no longer recognisable.
If the departed person misses this time and does not recognise the Bardo but merely adapts to it, they will miss the opportunity presented. That is why it is essential for everyone on earth to master the teachings on the Bardo. Then they will recognise their situation, will not miss the opportunity, and will be liberated.

Towards rebirth

(Instructions to the minister:) If, due to gross negligence in religious practice and a lack of understanding, the person in question is unable even to grasp this, the departed soul will be overwhelmed by visions and will wander towards the gate of the womb. The teaching on closing the mother's womb will now be of the utmost importance. Call the departed by name and say this:
Sir, if you did not understand what I said earlier, at this very moment you have the impression that you have neither risen, nor moved horizontally, nor sunk. Immerse yourself in the vision of the Great Compassionate One. Meditate. Come to your senses. Now you will be struck by gusts of wind, icy storms, hailstorms; darkness surrounds you and you feel as though you are being pursued by a countless multitude. If one hides from these visions, if one's karma is not very good, one will feel as though one has fallen into misery; if one's karma is good, however, one will feel that one has attained happiness. Now, Lord, at the place of your birth and the continent are are shining to you, the the place, where you intend to be born. There are several very profound teachings regarding this moment. Listen carefully. Even if you did not understand during the previous face-to-face sessions, you will understand now, for even those who have completely neglected religious practices can understand this sign. Pay attention. (Instruction to attendant:) Now is to mother's womb to . For this the greatest care must . There are two main ways to seal it off: either prevent the being that wishes to enter from doing so, or close the gateway through which it could enter.
(In mother's womb) entry preventing .) The instructions for preventing the entry of a being are as follows:
My Lord, whoever your guardian deity may be, contemplate him calmly, regard him

as if it were the moon on the surface of the water, which is visible but not real, like a dazzling vision. If you have no guardian deity, contemplate the Compassionate God, or me. Accept these images and meditate calmly.
Then dispel the contours of the guardian deity's sensory form and meditate on the empty and pure Light, avoiding all thought-forms. This is very profound knowledge; possessing it, one does not enter the womb of the mother.
(The first teaching on closing the gate of the womb.)
Meditate in this way. However, if this is not sufficient to prevent you from entering the womb of the mother, and you are already ready to enter one of them, then here is the profound teaching on closing the gate of the womb of the mother. Listen.
Alas, if the Sidpa Bardo looms above you,
Keep in mind the single resolve that the chain
of good karma must be continued.
Close the gate of the mother's womb. Do not forget to resist.
This is the time when you need seriousness and pure love. Give up
jealousy and meditate on the guru, who is your father and mother.
Repeat this clearly with your own mouth and meditate on it. Do not forget to put it into practice. This teaching says: the Sidpa Bardo looms over me. This means that you are now wandering in the Sidpa Bardo. The sign of this is that if you look into water or a mirror, you will not see your face or the reflection of your body, and your body casts no shadow. You have shed your coarse physical body of flesh and blood. This is the sign that you are wandering in the Sidpa Bardo.
At this time, you must hold a single resolve in your mind. Forming this single resolve is very important now. It is like a person guiding a horse's running by using the reins.
Whatever you wish for will come to pass. So do not dwell on evil deeds that might alter the course of your mind. Remember your spiritual kinship with this reader, or with someone else from whom you received teaching, initiation, or, whilst you were in the human world, permission to read religious texts, and hold fast to your intention to do good deeds. This is very important. Do not falter. You have now reached the boundary where the path leads either upwards or downwards. If you allow uncertainty to find a voice, even for a single moment, you will have to endure a long, long period of misery. This is that moment. Hold fast to your single intention. Persistently link together the chain of good deeds. You have now reached the time when you must close the gate of the womb. This is a time when you need the seriousness and pure love that

means that the time has come when, above all, you must close the gate of the mother's womb. There are three methods of closing it. Engrave this well in your heart.

(The second teaching on closing the gate of the womb:)

Lord, at this time you will see male and female beings in your visions, at the moment of union. When you see them, remember that you must restrain yourself and must not step between them. Regard the father as your guru, regard the mother as the Divine Mother, meditate upon them and bow before them. Practise your faith humbly. Offer your prayers to them and resolve to seek spiritual guidance from them.

This resolve is sufficient to ensure that the mother's womb closes securely. However, if it does not close, but you feel ready to enter, meditate on the divine guru, who is both your father and your mother, or meditate on another protective deity; and as you contemplate them, pay homage to them with spiritual offerings. Resolve firmly that you will seek their benevolence. In this way, the gate of the mother's womb will surely close.

(The third teaching on closing the gate of the mother's womb:)

If the womb still cannot be closed and you are ready to enter, I shall now show you the third method, to protect you from both attraction and aversion. There are four modes of birth: birth from an egg, birth from the womb, supernatural birth, and birth from warm vapour. Of these four, birth from an egg and birth from the womb are, by their very nature, the same.

I have already mentioned that in your vision, male and female beings appear at the moment of union. If, driven by attraction or aversion, one enters the womb, one may be born as a horse, or a bird, or a dog, or a human.

If a person intends to be born as a male being, the knower of things knows this: they have a vague sense of themselves as a male being, and a piercing hatred and jealousy arise within them towards the father, and attraction towards the mother.

If a person intends to be born as a female being, the knower of things knows this: they have a dawning sense of themselves as a female being; a piercing hatred arises within them towards the mother, and attraction and love towards the father.

The knower of things knows that at this point the person in the Bardo falls into unconsciousness. At the same time, when the sperm and the egg are in union. Later, they find themselves enclosed in an egg as an embryo. And when they emerge from the womb and open their eyes, they realise they have been born a puppy. Before, they were a human being, but now they are a dog

and must suffer in the kennel. Or as a piglet in the pigsty, or an ant in the anthill, or as an insect in a rotten tree, or as a calf, or a goat, or a lamb. And from this life, a return to human life is impossible. He must endure stupor, wretched spiritual darkness, and suffer through torments. On this path, a person may even reach the very depths of the world, joining the unhappy ghosts, and must endure unimaginable misery in hell.

CHAG GYA CHENPO

(The Great Symbol of Liberation)

When one retreats to a secluded and quiet place and sits down, one should remain motionless for the very first few minutes, thinking of nothing; one should not emphasise, bring to mind or say: 'I have come here to meditate and now I am devoting myself to contemplation or spiritual practice', do not bring this to the fore, do not make it a conscious thought, and do not say: 'I have come here to meditate and now I dedicate myself to contemplation.'

This stillness of the body, this silence of the mind and the word, undisturbed by any intention or tension, having no purpose, is called: entering one's original, natural state. For this stillness and peaceful, motionless silence is man's original and natural state.

The ancients said:

Do not dwell on the
past. Do not dwell on
the future.
Do not think: now I shall contemplate.
Do not think that the vast empty space you are experiencing is Nothingness.

Whatever impressions may reach your senses, do not now curiously seek out the causes, do not analyse them; on the contrary, leave your spirit in peace and tranquillity.

The ancients said:

If a person's consciousness does not form images, concepts and thoughts that correspond to the things experienced,
if the spirit is at peace, as in a child, if a person
follows the instructions of their Guide,
then one will come to understand the great void and be freed from the illusion of the material world. For these two things coincide.

Tilopa said:

Do not imagine anything, do not occupy your mind, do not analyse.
Do not resolve to contemplate or to meditate.
Keep your mind in its natural, primordial state. The
master of the Marmidze teachings said:
Let the wandering of the mind and its straying amongst the images it creates cease. Mindfulness is the path by which every Buddha

ascended to the heights.
This is what is called the stilling of the mind, whereby one remains motionless in the natural, primordial state.
Nagarjuna said:
Never forget that mindfulness is the only path. Every Buddha has walked this path.
Keep your physical body under constant observation so that you may come to know it as well as possible: the body's activities, the functioning of the senses, the causes and consequences of those activities.
If you neglect mindfulness, all your ascetic practices are in vain. Abhidharma said:
To remember is to never forget the being and the thing you have ever encountered.
Gampopa's master said:
If the mind settles, it becomes calm. If water does not move, it becomes clear.
Milarepa, the great master of contemplation, said:
When the mind returns to its primordial, natural state, taking on no form whatsoever, it sees how that which is called knowledge and understanding arises in human beings.
If the mind flows calmly and quietly, like the peaceful waters of a mighty river, it is not the knowledge and understanding of the individual self that will arise within it, but the image of eternal reality will appear on the still surface of the water.
The wise Saraha summed up this dual experience as follows: If the spirit is bound, it will seek to break free in ten different directions. If the spirit is set free, it remains motionless.
The spirit is a stubborn beast, like a camel.

TIBETAN AND SANSKRIT WORDS

amrita – the drink of the gods and the saved, nectar.
atman – the universal, eternal self, contrasted with the individual self.
Brahma – the creator and supreme deity.
brahma-opening – the opening at the very top of the skull, the fontanelle. dakini – a female demon.
Dharma-Kaya – the material manifestation of the supreme deity: his spiritual body. guru – spiritual guide.
Heruka – a protective deity.
Kargyütpa – a sect founded by the saint Padmasambhava, an archaic form of the Bon religion.
mandala – a mystical image, usually drawn in a circular form: a symbol of the world. mantra – a magic formula, a phrase with sacred content.
Meru – according to mystical geography, the mountain rising at the centre of the world, which coincides with the centre of the human body. Equivalents: Olympus for the Greeks, Sinai in the Bible, Albordj for the Persians, etc.
naljorpa – ascetic.
nirvana – the highest, supernatural state of awareness. samadhi – the ecstatic state of meditation and yoga.
samsara – the turmoil, impurity and degradation of life in the material world.
Shiva – the deity of destruction and renewal.
Vishnu – the sustaining and protective deity.

The Tibetan words have been transcribed according to the English spelling used in Europe. Pronunciation: ch=cs, j=dzs, sh=s, s=sz, y=j. The other sounds are as in Hungarian.

BERSERKER

BOOKS